This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

UNTRODDEN ENGLISH WAYS

HENRY C. SHELLEY

Digitized by Google

Br 3619.08.9

Harvard College Library

FROM

Dr. Morris Longstreth

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNTRODDEN ENGLISH WAYS

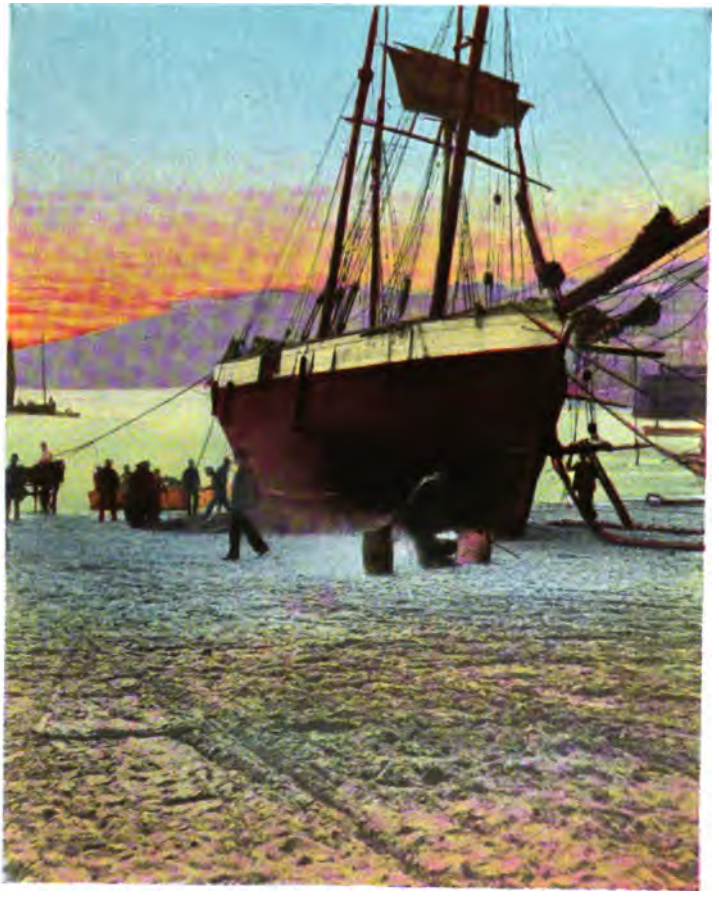
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



ASHORE FOR REPAIRS — ST. IVES.

Digitized by Google

UNTROUDEN ENGLISH WAYS

HENRY [illegible]

[illegible] OF [illegible]

[illegible] HARVARD [illegible]

With Four [illegible] in [illegible]
and [illegible] from [illegible] by H. [illegible]
and [illegible] Photographs by the Author

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1908

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNTRODDEN ENGLISH WAYS

BY

HENRY C. SHELLEY

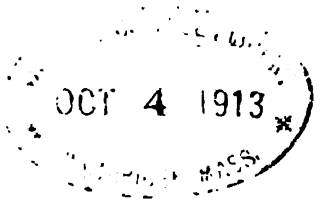
AUTHOR OF "LITERARY BY-PATHS IN OLD ENGLAND,"
"JOHN HARVARD AND HIS TIMES," ETC.

With Four Full-Page Plates in Colour,
and Illustrations from Drawings by H. C. Colby
and from Photographs by the Author

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1908

Digitized by Google

Br 3619.08.9



Copyright, 1908,
BY LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

All rights reserved

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

TO

WILLIAM E. HASKELL

IN SINCERE APPRECIATION OF
CONFIDENCE AND FRIENDSHIP

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

In selecting a collective title for the following chapters it has been found impossible, at any rate by the author, to search out a collocation of words more comprehensive than the one which stands on the title page. That it is open to an objection is frankly admitted. By no license can Poets' Corner be described as "untrodden," and that adjective may also be inappropriate in one or two additional instances.

Nevertheless, and apart altogether from the plea which might be based on the fact that few books conform faithfully to their titles, it may be claimed that "Untrodden English Ways" accurately describes nine-tenths of the volume's contents. The best test of this will be for the reader to consider what measure of acquaintance he has with the various places described. He will know more of England than the average Englishman, and greatly exceed the knowledge of the

Digitized by Google

most zealous tourist, if he can claim to have trodden many of these ways.

When a country has so ancient a history as England, it is inevitable that even its most neglected corners shall enshrine much of human interest. To the author those byways have always possessed a subtler charm than the highways of common knowledge. Hence the seeking out of the unusual attempted in these pages, a departure from convention which may, it is hoped, be justified by the results.

Perhaps it will be of service to the tourist to point out that the chapters are arranged in a geographical order, and that by starting at St. Ives in Cornwall it will be possible to follow these untrodden ways in easy sequence.

H. C. S.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	At the Edge of the Land	3
II.	Fair Devon	21
III.	Bath and its Baths	39
IV.	John Keble's Hursley	57
V.	Oatlands Park	77
VI.	Poets' Corner	91
VII.	Royalty in Wax	111
VIII.	Bunhill Fields	127
IX.	Fred Walker's Cookham	147
X.	By Famous Graves	167
XI.	Concerning Dick Turpin	181
XII.	Beaconsfield	195
XIII.	The Norfolk Broads	215
XIV.	In the Lincolnshire Fens	229
XV.	Witney and Minster Lovel	249
XVI.	Three Memorable Pulpits	267
XVII.	Five Famous Schools	283
XVIII.	Water Worship in Derbyshire	297
XIX.	Warkworth and Its Hermitage	309
XX.	A Highland Noble's Home	327

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Full-page Plates in Colour

Ashore for Repairs, St. Ives	*Frontispiece.*	
Bath, from the Avon	*Page*	46
Cookham Lock	"	152
Cookham, on the Thames	"	152
Minster Lovel, from the Meadows	"	250

Full-page Plates

A St. Ives Studio	*Page*	8
An Exhibition at St. Ives	"	8
St. Ives' Harbour	"	12
Gurnard's Head	"	12
On a Devon Stream	"	24
A Farmhouse in Devon	"	28
Cockington Village	"	28
Site of Hypocaust Bath	"	50
The Roman Baths	"	50
Graves of John Keble and his Wife	"	66
Hursley Church	"	66
Cedars of Lebanon, Oatlands	"	78
Old Portion of Oatlands Mansion	"	80
The Dogs' Cemetery, Oatlands	"	80
Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey	"	94
Queen Elizabeth	"	118
Queen Mary	"	118
Lord Nelson	"	122
Charles II.	"	122
The Cromwell Vault	"	140
John Bunyan's Tomb	"	140
Cookham Church	"	154
Cliveden Woods	"	154

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Grave of Laurence Sterne	*Page*	170
Where Thackeray Sleeps	"	170
Hogarth's Grave	"	176
The Rossetti Grave	"	176
Turpin's Ring, Hempstead	"	188
Dick Turpin's Birthplace	"	190
Turpin's Oak	"	190
The Grave of Waller	"	204
Horning Ferry	"	218
On the Bure	"	222
Harvest in the Broads	"	222
Home from the Broads	"	226
Wind and Water Mills of the Fens	"	230
Crowland Abbey	"	236
Gretford Hall	"	236
West Deeping Church and Font	"	244
Minster Lovel	"	262
Lord Lovel's Tomb	"	262
Cardinal Manning's Pulpit	"	272
Dr. Arnold's Pulpit in Rugby Chapel	"	272
Shakespeare's School	"	286
Sir Isaac Newton's School	"	286
The Manor Well	"	306
The Town Well	"	306
Gatehouse on Warkworth Bridge	"	310
Warkworth Castle	"	310
Warkworth Hermitage	"	320
On the Coquet	"	320
The Saloon, Inverary	"	332
The Duchess' Boudoir, Inverary	"	332
Frew's Bridge, Inverary	"	340
Inverary Castle	"	340

Illustrations in the Text

Catfield Staithe	*Vignette on Title*	
An Artist Pupil	*Page*	7
Castle-An-Dinas	"	16

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A Devon Lane	*Page*	27
Entrance to Kent's Cavern	"	31
A Corner of the Baths	"	41
Bath Abbey	"	51
Hursley Vicarage	"	70
Prince Henry of Oatlands	"	79
The Duchess of York	"	86
The Duke of Buckingham	"	121
Daniel Defoe's Grave	"	136
The Grave of Isaac Watts	"	142
Fred Walker's Home at Cookham	"	149
Fred Walker's Grave	"	159
The Walker Medallion in Cookham Church	"	161
George Eliot's Grave	"	173
Burke's Memorial in Beaconsfield Church	"	206
At Wroxham	"	217
A Norfolk Dyke	"	220
On the Welland	"	237
The Triangular Bridge, Crowland	"	243
Witney Blanket Hall	"	253
The Butter Cross at Witney	"	257
John Cotton's Pulpit	"	268
Façade of Keats' Schoolhouse	"	291
Tissington Village	"	302
Warkworth Bridge	"	321
The Armory, Inverary Castle	"	331

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

I

AT THE EDGE OF THE LAND

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNTRODDEN ENGLISH WAYS

AT THE EDGE OF THE LAND

LESLIE STEPHEN always had one irresistible argument to use when he wanted the companionship of James Russell Lowell at St. Ives. "I argued," Stephen has recorded, "that one main charm of the Land's End to him was that nothing intervened between it and Massachusetts."

Perhaps that did not exhaust the attractiveness of the district for Lowell. "Every year," Stephen wrote, "we paid a visit to Land's End. He confirmed my rooted belief that it is one of the most beautiful headlands in the world. He admitted that our Cornish sea can be as blue as the Mediterranean, to which in other respects it has an obvious superiority." But it was not with the Mediterranean that Lowell's thoughts were most busy; "Cornwall," he said, "has

Digitized by Google

St. Erth's in it, where sometimes one has beatific visions. I find a strange pleasure in that name too, so homely and motherly, as if some pope had suddenly bethought himself to canonize this dear old Earth of ours so good to us all, and give the body as well as the soul a share in those blessed things."

In that reflection may be found the clue to the fascination which the westmost land of Cornwall has possessed for others than Lowell and Stephen. Hither, to the same ideal headquarters of St. Ives, years earlier than the visits of those two friends, once came F. Max Müller for an autumnal vacation. The great scholar soon found his ears and eyes assailed by names of fields and lanes and stones and houses and villages such as held rich treasures for his philological imagination. "I wish I could stay here longer," he wrote, "it is a delightful neighbourhood and full of interest. *Now and then one feels very near the old world.* How careless people are about Celtic antiquities; while they send off men-of-war to fetch home the lions and bulls of Nineveh, farmers are allowed to pull down cromlechs and caves, and use the stones for pig-styes." Still later in his visit Max Müller confessed that he would "gladly give up Oxford

Digitized by Google

and settle here, in a cottage by the sea-shore, and finish my edition and translation of the Veda. . . . The air here is so invigorating and life so easy, natural, and uninterrupted by society, that one feels up to any amount of work."

One feels very near the old world. Such is the secret of the spell cast over all alike at the edge of the land. That nearness to the old world is largely owing to the fact that St. Ives and its vicinity have been brought into touch with the new world only within the last generation. A century and a half ago William Borlase, the Gilbert White of Cornwall, noted that the situation of the county, "secluded in a manner from the rest of Britain, renders it, like all distant objects, less distinctly seen by the polite, learned, and busy world." What was true of Cornwall as a whole a hundred and fifty years ago remained true of St. Ives and its hinterland within recent memory.

Even yet the "polite, learned, and busy world" does not concern itself overmuch with this remote district. The iron road from London bifurcates at that St. Erth of Lowell's "beatific visions," sending out one arm to Penzance on the south coast and another to St.

Digitized by Google

Ives on the north, and in each place its glittering track comes to a definite end. Westward of those termini lies a compact little country where one still "feels very near the old world," where the spirit if not the letter of the Latin poet's ancient lines yet holds good:

> Of Titan's monstrous race,
> Only some few disturb'd that happy place;
> Raw hides they wore for clothes, their drink was blood,
> Rocks were their dining-rooms, their prey their food.
> Their cups some hollow trunk, their bed a groove,
> Murder their sport, and violence their love.

Fortunate, indeed, were Max Müller, and Lowell, and Stephen in their choice of St. Ives for their headquarters at the edge of the land. They might have gone to Penzance instead, Penzance which is new without brightness and old without quaintness. Such buildings as are new at St. Ives have the saving grace of their quality; such as are old — by far the majority — wear their years with archaic charm.

Perhaps that difference explains why the "learned" world finds itself most at home in St. Ives. Even the most inobservant visitor cannot remain many days in this quaint fishing-town without discovering that he is surrounded

Digitized by Google

by authors and artists. Not a few of the most notable writers of the younger generation have made their home here, and novel after novel by Charles Marriott, and Harold Begbie, and Guy Thorne betrays the influence of the environment in which it was penned.

AN ARTIST PUPIL

Still larger and more potent in its influence is the artist colony of St. Ives. The painters who have located their studios here number more than half a hundred, but their pupils — many of whom come from the United States and Canada — swell the colony to several times that total. Various circumstances account for the existence of this large band of painters. Apart from the prime factor that the vicinity provides unlimited wealth of pictorial material in simple landscape

Digitized by Google

or the ever-changing aspect of the sea, the decay of the fishing industry has forced many a sail-loft out of its legitimate business and opened the way for its transformation into an artist's studio at a moderate cost. Consequently almost every alternate rambling shed looking out on the bay of St. Ives no longer hoards the sails and spars of fishing craft, but is given over instead to canvas of another kind and to paints and easels and maul-sticks.

Disused sail-lofts have their natural corollary in deserted fishermen's cottages, and in those humble dwellings the artists find their economical homes for two-thirds of the year, renting them for the remaining third to summer visitors. Hence the barb of the local satire: "They call themselves artists, and all they do is to take a house and then let it for double the rent."

Nor does the native point of view stop at a shrewd suspicion that some of the artists find greater profit in their subletting enterprises than in their labours at the easel. Clinging to their Bohemianism in spite of the nearness of "the old world," some of the painters forgot at first to respect the Sabbatarian and other prejudices of their simple neighbours. Out of that forgetfulness grew contempt. Thus one

Digitized by Google

A ST. IVES STUDIO.

AN EXHIBITION AT ST. IVES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

local legend tells of a driver who, when his horse had fallen, after exhausting his usual vocabulary, resorted to, "Get up you d——d artist!" And another St. Ives anecdote relates how a native questioned a young lady visitor thus: "You're not one of they artists, are you?" Heedless of the answer, "No; I wish I was," the native found himself able to reach the comforting conclusion, "Ah, I thought you was a lady."

Models are plentiful for the painters of St. Ives. Toilers of the sea reddened by wind and spray and sun; anxious wives whose eager faces reflect the weary watchings of stormy nights; peasants of farm and moor; here and there a wrinkled miner, a survival of an industry almost forgotten; supple boys and girls fair and swarthy, garbed in the rough but picturesque raiment of fishermen's children. These latter the painters lure into their studios without motherly preparation for formal "sittings," only to provoke the expostulation: "I don't like my children sent dirty all over the world. They ain't always dirty."

British art owes not alone to the St. Ives colony those translucent seascapes which are its most conspicuous product; it is indebted further for

Digitized by Google

many a canvas which seeks to reveal the inner spirit of dissenting religious life. Methodism, and other severely simple forms of Christian faith, can count many adherents in St. Ives, and these pious souls have not been unnoted by the painters who dwell in their midst. There have already passed into the history of British art not a few canvases which have depicted the dissenters of St. Ives at their devotions, and it is the chief merit of those pictures that they have pierced through the homeliness of rude worshippers and glorified the soul of their faith. For all their adoption of an eighteenth-century fashion of the Christian creed, these lowly worshippers preserve the unquestioning assurance of a long-past age, and they as well as their land seem to bring one " very near the old world."

Apart from its church, St. Ives cannot boast any buildings of ornate pretensions. The houses are simple, stone-built structures for the most part, harmonizing faithfully with the remoteness of the town's general atmosphere, and following in irregular lines the abrupt and rapid ascents and descents of the narrow and tortuous streets. Few of those streets have any sidewalks, a deficiency which throws the pedestrian on his resources when meeting a chance vehicle, but

Digitized by Google

they are so rich in delightful nooks and corners that no one would have them other than they are.

And there are other compensations. From the high land at the back of the town, and at each turn in the road on the descent, or through the gaps of the huddled houses, there come ever and anon glimpses of the bay of St. Ives, unrivalled along all the coast of England for its broad curving sweep or its placid aspect. From the Island point on the west to Godrevy on the east is a distance of but three short miles, and the farthest shore of the bay is but a couple of miles from the open sea. A small stage for the pageantry of nature, but sufficient. The scene is hardly for an hour the same. Now it is framed with the verdant ridge of the curving shore; anon a silver veil obliterates that dividing line and mingles the picture with the illimitable heavens. And the waters beneath are as changeful as the clouds above. This hour they will throw back the deep blue of the upper spaces; the next they will change chameleon-like to the hue of the sands they lave. And ever, amid all the transitions of light and colour, there is the voice, the caressing voice of the sea.

Yet the harbour is close at hand, the harbour

Digitized by Google

where the labour of man rather than the repose of nature is the dominant note. Save during the calm of the day of rest, here is the centre of activity in St. Ives. Mounds of baskets and boxes speak of the awaited harvest of the sea, and that is an idle hour when boats are not coming to land with their freights, or carts are not being backed down in the shallow water to the side of some laden craft. Higher up on the beach, strown with the dark wrack of the sea, or littered with cordage and chains and anchors, such of the fishing fleet as need repairs recline at a picturesque angle, the graceful lines of the boats rendered still more attractive by being seen through the smoke ascending from beneath cauldrons of boiling tar.

Fourteen miles westward from St. Ives the last rocks of England drop downward into the wide Atlantic. The country between is mostly moorland, lifting itself now and then into a hilly summit, barren of trees, and fronting the gaze of man with a strangely impassive aspect. The dominant colour is the greyish hue of ancient granite, relieved in patches with the green and gold of gorse or the purple of heather. Odd shaped boulders are scattered everywhere over the landscape, and everything seems to belong

Digitized by Google

ST. IVES' HARBOUR.

GURNARD'S HEAD.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

to the past. The very stone fences that skirt the roads and divide the landscape into irregular plots are so amorphous in shape and so stained by time that each boulder might challenge belief as a relic of the Druidic age. No wonder Max Müller felt " very near the old world."

Often in roaming through this hinterland the explorer finds the skyline broken by a pertinent reminder of far-off days. It will take the form of a square stone-built structure having at its side a slender, overtopping chimneyshaft, and enquiry will elicit the information that this building is but one of the countless engine-houses which mark the sites of the abandoned mines of Cornwall.

Among the legends of the county is one which offers an ingenious explanation of how tin came to be discovered in Cornwall:

" S. Piran came over from Ireland in a coracle, and, like a prudent man, brought with him a bottle of whisky. On landing on the north coast he found that there was a hermit there named Chigwidden. The latter was quite agreeable to be friends with the new-comer, who was full of Irish tales, Irish blarney, and had, to boot, a bottle of Irish whisky. Who would not love a stranger under the circumstances?

Digitized by Google

Brothers Chigwidden and Piran drank up the bottle.

"'By dad,' said Piran, 'bothered if there be another dhrop to be squeezed out! Never mind, my spiritual brother, I'll show you how to distil the crayture. Pile me up some stones, and we'll get up the devil of a fire, and we shall make enough to expel the deuce out of ould Cornwall.'

"So Chigwidden collected a number of black stones, and the two saints made a fine fire — when, lo! out of the black stones thus exposed to the heat ran a stream like liquid silver. Thus was tin discovered."

That picturesque legend would place the discovery of tin in Cornwall somewhere in the fifth century. Unfortunately for the legend, the ancients came to Cornwall for tin many centuries before Piran and Chigwidden celebrated their friendship over a bottle of Irish whisky. Diodorus, who dates back to the closing half of the century before Christ, speaks of the inhabitants of the extremity of Britain who "prepare tin, working very skilfully the earth which produces it." And they continued to work "very skilfully" for many centuries. A hundred years ago the tin and copper mines of Cornwall pro-

Digitized by Google

duced metal to the value of about one million pounds annually. But that is a prosperity of the past. Owing primarily to the discovery of surface tin, which can be more cheaply worked, and to a less degree to rash and dishonest speculation, the mining industry of Cornwall has practically ceased to exist, its only memorials being these silent engine-houses, which, with their vacant windows, have the appearance of stolid giants watching the landscape with eyeless sockets.

But even that calamity is not without its bright side. William Borlase, the devoted county historian already alluded to, had to confess, a century and a half ago, that the air of Cornwall was not all that could be desired. "As there are so many mines in Cornwall," he wrote, "and most of them yield sulphur, vitriol, mundic, and gossan, they cannot but affect the air with their steams in proportion to the quantity yielded by the mine, and the facility with which their parts separate and ascend into the atmosphere." It must have grieved Mr. Borlase to make that confession, especially as he was not ignorant of the fact that an Elizabethan writer had declared that the "ayre" of Cornwall "is cleansed, as with bellowes, by the billows,

Digitized by Google

and flowing and ebbing of the sea, and therethrough becommeth pure and subtle, and by consequence, healthfull." Well, the faithful shade of Mr. Borlase must rejoice that his own one-time truthful record must now give place to the Elizabethan eulogy owing to the abandonment of those " so many mines."

Turn which way he will, the explorer of this Cornish hinterland finds his feet pressing on ancient landmarks. Among the sand dunes near Godrevy lighthouse he can lay his hands on the stones of the oldest Christian building in England, the oratory of St. Gwithian, one of the numerous Irish saints who sailed into St. Ives' bay in the fifth and sixth centuries. A few miles southward from St. Ives he can climb to the ruins of Castle-an-Dinas and explore the narrow apartments of a stronghold which was a royal residence in the long-dead years when Cornwall was a kingdom in its own right.

CASTLE - AN - DINAS

Or, if he would delve farther back into the

Digitized by Google

past, and appreciate to the full the sentiment of close contact with Max Müller's "old world," let him seek out Chapel Carn Brea Hill, where the swing of the broad Atlantic against the last iron rocks of England will form no unfitting accompaniment to his meditations. On this hill, the last in all England and a beacon well known to those sailing from the west, he will reach back with more than imagination to the Stone Age. On the crown of the hill are the foundation stones of a Christian edifice, but below that is a dolmen of the Age of Bronze, and beneath that again is a giant's cave of the Age of Stone. Nowhere in all England shall the explorer get nearer the "old world" than that.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

II

FAIR DEVON

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FAIR DEVON

FOR three distinct districts of England a similar claim is made. Kent, the Isle of Wight, and Devonshire is each in turn declared to be "the garden of England."

To decide among these contestants might be as dangerous an undertaking as that which fell to the lot of Paris. The county of Kent has undeniable charms: its gently undulating landscape, its peaceful farms, its picturesque hop-gardens and oasts, its venerable churches and castles, all combine to create a memory of enchanting beauty. Nor is the Isle of Wight less liberally endowed with nature's favours or romantic memorials of human history. Yet, when all pleas have been entered and weighed, no other verdict is possible than that Devonshire is the fairest, the most beautiful of all English counties. And in reaching that conclusion it may be that the factor which influenced Paris is not inoperative; for the daughters of Devon are the Helens of England.

Digitized by Google

Of course a Devonian is a prejudiced witness. Yet the eulogy of one such may be cited, chiefly because it suggests some of those qualities which are still characteristic of the county. William Browne, the Elizabethan poet who sang "Britannia's Pastorals," saluted Devonshire in these proud lines:

Hail thou, my native soil! thou blessed plot,
Whose equal all the world affordeth not!
Show me who can so many crystal rills,
Such sweet clothed valleys, or aspiring hills;
Such woods, grand pastures, quarries, wealthy mines,
Such rocks in which the diamond fairly shines;
And if the earth can show the like again,
Yet will she fail in her sea-ruling men.
Time never can produce men to o'ertake
The fames of Grenville, Davies, Gilbert, Drake,
Or worthy Hawkins, or of thousands more,
That by their power made the Devonian shore
Mock the proud Tagus; for whose richest spoil
The boasting Spaniard left the Indian soil
Bankrupt of store, knowing it would quit the cost
By winning this, though all the rest were lost.

Remembering how potent a part the sons of Devon bore in the overthrow of the Spanish Armada, Browne's pride in his county is pardonable. Neither in the sixteenth nor any later century has any other district of England bred so many "sea-ruling men." Even were that

Digitized by Google

not true, Devon has glory enough in numbering among her children Sir Richard Grenville, the hero of that dauntless sea-fight which rivals the glory of Thermopylæ.

Some items in Browne's catalogue of praise may have been deleted by the hand of time, and it is questionable whether the rocks "in which the diamond fairly shines" ever existed; but in the main the attractions of Devon are unchanged. Yet, lest disappointment usurp the place of realized expectations, one warning should be laid to heart. The county will not give up its charms to the hasty traveller. He who clings to the steel highway of the railroad, who makes towns and cities the boundaries of his explorations, and dashes in speed from one "sight" to another, will leave the county wholly ignorant of its peculiar beauties. There is no district in England where it is so essential to desert the beaten track, to cut one's self off from communication with conventional transport; where the byways are infinitely more than the highways.

One word frequently recurrent in Devonshire speech holds priceless suggestion for those to whom it is more than a name. It is the word "combe," a geographical term of distinctive

Digitized by Google

West country use. To harmonize with its broad Devonshire pronunciation it would be better spelt "coombe," but even that concession to phonetics will fail to represent the melody of the word on native lips. And neither pen nor painter's brush can hope to render justice to that product of the Devon landscape for which the word stands. Combes, as Eden Phillpotts explains in "My Devon Year," have a distinction of their own, "and few natural scenes can be compared with these deep hollows and sudden valleys. They might be likened to miniature presentments of the Derbyshire dales, or Scottish glens made tame and tiny and sleepy. They might be called denes or dingles, straths or dells, or any other word that stands to mean a sequestered place within the lap of high lands. Some of our combes," Mr. Phillpotts continues, "open gradually, through pastures and orchards, from the hills to the plains; some break out in steep gullies and embouchures of limestone or sandstone to the sea; some are concavities, where Nature hollows her hand to hold man's homestead. Gentle depressions between red-bosomed hills, wide meadows extending to the estuaries of rivers, sharp rifts echoing with thunder of waves, and upland

Digitized by Google

ON A DEVON STREAM.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

plains between the high lands, where whole villages may cuddle, may all be combes. So much do they vary in their character."

But specific description may be more illuminating than general characterization. So another whole-hearted lover of Devon, Charles Kingsley, shall, from the pages of "Westward Ho!" tell what his eyes saw in the combes of that fortunate land. "Each is like the other, and each is like no other English scenery. Each has its upright walls, inland of rich oakwood, nearer the sea of dark green furze, then of smooth turf, then of weird black cliffs which range out right and left into the deep sea, in castles, spires, and wings of jagged iron-stone. Each has its narrow strip of fertile meadow, its crystal trout-stream winding across and across from one hill-foot to the other; its grey stone mill, with the water sparkling and humming round the dripping well; its dark rock pools above the tide-mark, where the salmon-trout gather in from their Atlantic wanderings, after each autumn flood; its ridges of blown sand, bright with golden trefoil and crimson lady's fingers, its grey bank of polished pebbles, down which the stream rattles towards the sea below." Such is the combe of the northern coast, but those of the southern shore "are

Digitized by Google

narrower and less searched by the sun. They lie deep hid in ferns and shade-loving things; they hide the lovely bee-orchis, the purple gromwell, the lesser meadow-rue, the seaside carrot, the crow-garlic, the wood-vetch, the Bithynian vetch, and other treasures. Their sides are draped with the wild clematis, their red cliff-faces furnish a home for jackdaws and hawks. And inland lie those deep resting-places that abound in this county of many hills."

If the studious observer of nature attempted to analyse its aspects in Devonshire in search of its most distinctive quality, the quality which lends such a peculiar charm of grace and softness to the landscape, he would probably reach the conclusion that the fern is chiefly responsible for that effect. Botanists have pointed out that in the number and variety of those beautiful plants Devon outrivals every county of England. "There they are in very truth at home. The soil and the air are adapted to them, and they adapt themselves to the whole aspect of the place. They clothe its hillsides and its hilltops; they grow in the moist depths of its valleys; they fringe the banks of its streams; they are to be found in the recesses of its woods; they hang from rocks and walls and trees, and crowd into

Digitized by Google

the towns and villages, fastening themselves with sweet familiarity even to the houses."

But of the inanimate landscape there is one other feature which must not be overlooked. The lanes of Devon are as distinctive as its combes, its ferns, its "sea-ruling men" and its clotted cream. No other rural highways of England are like unto them, unless it were those fearsome "hollow lanes" of Selborne which Gilbert White celebrated, but are now things of the past. The lanes of Devon are as labyrinthine as a maze, are sentinelled on either side by lofty banks crowned with tall hedges, are so narrow that the outstretched hands may often touch either bank, but are withal the treasure-houses of nature's fairest jewels. Reflecting on these qualities a local poet found his muse inspired to celebrate a comparison

A DEVON LANE

Digitized by Google

between the Devon lane and marriage, with the following result:

In the first place, 'tis long, and when once you are in it,
It holds you as fast as a cage does a linnet;
For howe'er rough and dirty the road may be found,
Drive forward you must, there is no turning round!

But though 'tis so long, it is not very wide;
For two are the most that together can ride;
And e'en then 'tis a chance but they get in a pother,
And jostle and cross, and run foul of each other.

Then the banks are so high, to the left hand and right,
That they shut up the beauties around them from sight!
And hence, you'll allow, 'tis an inference plain,
That marriage is just like a Devonshire lane.

But, thinks I too, these banks, within which we are pent,
With bud, blossom, and berry are richly besprent;
And the conjugal fence, which forbids us to roam,
Looks lovely when decked with the comforts of home.

Yet Devon combes, and ferns, and lanes might leave the visitor cold if they were all. Few, perhaps, ever stop to consider why some landscapes, though painted by great artists, give the impression of emptiness. But the secret is not deeply hidden. A picture, be it a canvas or a living landscape, lacks its completing charm unless it has some touch of human nature. A

Digitized by Google

A FARMHOUSE IN DEVON.

COCKINGTON VILLAGE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

figure or two will serve, but the springs of sympathy are more surely unsealed by the sight of a human dwelling. That is the most potent factor in establishing close relation between a beautiful sweep of country and its observer.

Such a factor is never far to seek in rural Devon. And in most instances it takes a form of irresistible appeal. The county is particularly rich in ancient family mansions of the Elizabethan period, suggestive of spacious chambers which have been hallowed by the sorrows and joys of many generations; of grassy alleys and flower-adorned bowers. And it is richer still in picturesque farmhouses which are little changed from the far-off years when their roofs sheltered Devon's famous "sea-ruling" sons. But richest of all is this fair land in the lowly, rose and creeper-clad, thatched cottage of the peasant. Because of their proximity to the fashionable resort of Torquay, the thatched cottages of Cockington village are probably the best-known examples of these humble Devon homes, but their duplicates may be found far and wide throughout the county.

Few of the counties of England have bred so many immortal sons as Devon. To the great band of empire-builders she gave Sir Walter

Digitized by Google

Raleigh, whose picturesque birthplace with its thatched and gabled roof and mullioned windows may be seen at Hayes Barton; to the company of artists she added Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose natal village awaits the visitor at Plympton Earl; in the glorious choir of English bards she is nobly represented by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who first saw the light at Ottery St. Mary; and Charles Kingsley, who was born at Holne, gives glory to his county in the realm of fiction.

Historic landmarks cluster thickly along the south coast of Devon. It was on the Hoe at Plymouth, where a fine statue of the hero may be seen, that Drake in 1588 insisted on finishing his memorable game at bowls, protesting that there was time enough for that and for thrashing the Spaniards too. This was the port, too, from which, thirty-two years later, the Mayflower finally set sail on her "waightie voiag." Farther east, round the lofty cape of Berry Head, on the western shore of Torbay, lies the fishing town of Brixham. Here, in 1688, a landing was effected which had as notable an influence on the course of English history as the coming of William of Normandy. When William of Orange set foot on shore in that far-off year Brixham was "undisturbed by the bustle either of commerce or of

Digitized by Google

pleasure; and the huts of ploughmen and fishermen were thinly scattered over what is now the site of crowded marts and luxurious pavilions." The Prince landed "where the quay of Brixham now stands. The whole aspect of the place has been altered. Where we now see a port crowded with shipping, and a market swarming with buyers and sellers, the waves then broke on a desolate beach; but a fragment of the rock on which the deliverer stepped from his boat has been carefully preserved, and is set up as an object of public veneration in the centre of that busy wharf."

ENTRANCE TO KENT'S CAVERN

Only a few miles away as the crow flies, a short distance east of Torquay, is a spot which in the domain of human thought has wrought as momentous changes as the landing of William of Orange effected in English history. In a small wooded limestone hill on the western side of a valley the traveller will find the modest entrance to Kent's Cavern, the exploration of which yielded results of

Digitized by Google

immense importance in deciding the antiquity of man.

Although the existence of Kent's Cavern has been known for a longer time than there is any record of, the first exploration of its numerous chambers seems to have been made less than a century ago. But a thorough investigation was not begun until 1865, when William Pengelly was commissioned by the British Association for the Advancement of Science to carry out an exhaustive exploration. The work, which was continued until 1880, thus extending over a period of fifteen years, could not have been committed to more capable hands. It has been described as " the most complete and systematic investigation of a cavern " ever attempted, and the thoroughness with which Mr. Pengelly carried it to its completion has assured him as secure a place in the annals of science as that of Darwin. During the fifteen years in which the work was in progress he visited the cavern almost daily for an average period of five hours, and then laboured at home in the examination of specimens often into the early morning hours. His devotion to his task, then, richly deserved the prospective epitaph he wrote for himself:

Digitized by Google

Here rests his head on balls of *album græcum*,
A youth who loved Cave-earth and stalagmite;
If fossil bones they held, he'd keenly seek 'em;
Exhume and name them with supreme delight.

His hammer, chisels, compass lie beside him;
His friends have o'er him piled this heap of stones.
Alas! alas! poor fellow! woe betide him
If, in the other world, there are no bones.

Probably few visitors to Kent's Cavern will be interested in the minute details of Mr. Pengelly's laborious work; they are rather for the geologist to appraise; but no one can grope through these quiet and sombre chambers unmoved. They have been visited by countless men and women of note, and to each doubtless they have been impressive because of the indisputable evidence they have afforded of the prodigious antiquity of man.

Whether the traveller in Devonshire devotes himself to exploring its combes, or wandering in its lanes, or visiting the haunts of famous men, or searching out historic spots, he will always be able to enjoy two of the county's distinctive products. Keats has preserved the memory of one of them in some verses he wrote while on a visit to Teignmouth. Thus, in a

Digitized by Google

poetical epistle to the painter Haydon — another son of Devon — he confessed:

> Here all the summer could I stay,
> For there's a Bishop's Teign,
> And a King's Teign,
> And Coomb at the clear Teign's head;
> Where, close by the stream,
> You may have your cream,
> All spread upon barley bread.

And another set of verses opened with these lines:

> Where be you going, you Devon maid?
> And what have ye there in the basket?
> Ye tight little fairy, just fresh from the dairy,
> Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

It is not surprising that Devonshire cream, "clotted cream" as it is called, should have made such an abiding impression on the poet's memory. Richard Doddridge Blackmore owns that no praise of "Lorna Doone" pleased him half so much as that encomium which declared the novel was "as good as Devonshire cream — almost." Many visitors to England who have not been in Devonshire labour under the delusion that they have tasted the cream of the county, and it certainly is true that large quantities are

Digitized by Google

sent to different parts of England daily through the post. But clotted cream eaten in Devon and the same cream eaten outside its boundaries are two different things; for, somehow, it seems to lose its delicate flavour when tasted anywhere save in the county itself.

Perhaps a similar though not so marked a transformation may be noticed in Devonshire cider. Yet, if rumour be true, the transformation may be gain rather than a loss. The story is told of a gentleman who applied to a Devon apple-orchard farmer for a hogshead of his sparkling cider. The farmer replied that he could not oblige him as in previous years, as a certain London firm had purchased his entire output of the beverage. On writing to the firm in question the disappointed customer received a note to this effect: "We are not cider merchants. You have made some mistake. We are a firm of champagne-importing merchants from the celebrated vineyards of MM. So and So, of So and So."

What adds greatly to the delights of rambling in Devon is the courtesy of its natives. The West country folk of England are perhaps more unspoilt than any others, open-hearted in their hospitality, and notable for certain old-world

Digitized by Google

graces of manner and speech. But they are not slow of wit. Thus the record stands of a boorish bicyclist who, not sure of his bearings in the quickly gathering dusk, accosted an aged farmer leaning on a gate:

"I say Johnnie, where am I? I want a bed."

"You'm fourteen miles from Wonford Asylum," was the quiet response, "and fourteen miles from Newton Work'us, and fourteen miles from Princetown Prison, and I reckon you could find quarters in any o' they — and suitable."

Digitized by Google

III

BATH AND ITS BATHS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BATH AND ITS BATHS

AT the risk of offending the somewhat sensitive guardians of the honour of Bath, the reflection shall be hazarded that the future of that city cannot hope to rival the glory of its past. In view of the vicissitudes of that past this may seem a daring prophecy. A chronicler of the early eighteenth century might have felt he was on sure ground in indulging in a similar forecast, only to have his gift of prevision made ridiculous by events which were still to happen.

Bath, indeed, has passed through three clearly-defined epochs of prosperity. The first of these dates far back to the period of the Roman occupation of Britain. Ignoring as little better than idle legends such stories as are told of British precursers, it seems established beyond dispute that the earliest to lay the foundations of a considerable city in this "warm vale" of the West were the triumphant masters of the old world. In dealing with such a remote period of

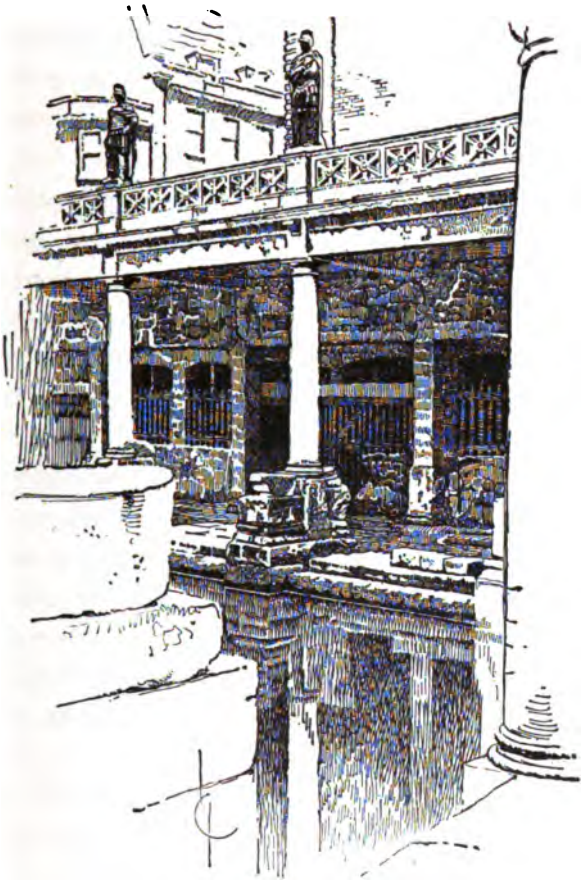
Digitized by Google

history it cannot be expected that any hard and fast date shall be available, and yet it seems likely that the advent of the Romans may be placed somewhere about the year 45 of our era. It was in the early years of the reign of Claudius, that mild and amiable occupant of the Cæsars' throne, that a Roman legion is recorded to have made a complete conquest of this part of Somersetshire. To this period, then, it is usual to "attribute the first foundation of Bath, when the Romans, attracted by the appearance of those hot springs, whose uses they so well knew and so highly valued, fixed upon the low and narrow vale in which they rose for the establishment of a station and the erection of a town."

For nearly four centuries the power of Rome was supreme in this sequestered dale of the West. Upon the rude foundations of the city reared about the year 45 subsequent rulers from the city by the Tiber upraised luxurious villas and stately temples. Due attention having been given by early comers to the military defences of the place, its subsequent and more leisurely adornment followed as the natural expression of the Roman temperament. "The elegant Agricola," surmises a local historian, "reposing a winter here from his successful campaign in

Digitized by Google

Wales, would, in pursuance of his customary



A CORNER OF THE BATHS

policy, decorate it with buildings, dedicated to piety and pleasure; and the polite Adrian,

Digitized by Google

thirty years afterwards, founded an establishment in it, which at once rendered it the most important place in the southern part of Britain. This was *Fabrica*, or College of Armourers, in which the military weapons for the use of the legions were manufactured."

Thus it is not difficult for the imagination to trace that transformation of Bath into a miniature Rome which was repeated so often in the subject provinces of the empire. And there is another factor which demands special attention in the present case. The Roman was a confirmed devotee of the bath. No city of his was complete without its *Thermæ*, the meeting-place for the idle as well as the halls for ablution. An essential feature of these institutions was the underground furnace by which the water was heated, but at Bath the Romans were spared the expense and labour of furnace-constructing owing to the abundant waters issuing from their springs already hot.

Under such circumstances of unusual good fortune it is not surprising that, in addition to the baths themselves, the most notable building reared here was a Temple of Minerva. It was erected on the site of the Pump-room of to-day, and considerable remains of its beautiful masonry

Digitized by Google

were brought to light years ago and may still be seen in the Royal Literary Institution of the city. These relics include the tympanum of the Temple, and substantial fragments of columns, cornices and pilasters, all testifying to the elegance and superb workmanship of a building which cannot have had its equal in all Britain.

Nor are these the only surviving vestiges of the Roman occupation of Bath. Keeping them silent company are pediments, and portals, and votive altars and monumental stones. From the time-worn inscriptions on these altars can be pieced together that gratitude for recovered health which was doubtless so fresh and sincere in those far-off years, but which sounds like a grim satire on human self-importance now that health and life itself matters so little; and this page of the dim past is fitly rounded off by the medicine stamp of a Roman quack which records that it was "the *Phœburn* (or Blistering Collyrium) of T. Junianus for such hopeless cases as have been given up by the Physicians." Alas for T. Junianus, who is himself now in a far more hopeless case than any of those credulous patients who pinned their faith to his Blistering Collyrium!

For the beauty of its situation, the healing

Digitized by Google

properties of its copious springs, and the social amenities it offered, Bath was no doubt exceedingly popular with the Roman soldiers and governors. Such a city must have offered liberal compensations for the exile even from Italy. In hardly any other outpost of the empire could life have held so many elements of pleasure. Yet, as the fifth century opened, the premonitions of coming changes must have cast a gloom over this happy Roman community. Internal decay and the assaults of the barbarians on the Western Empire were sapping the power which had so long held the nations in bondage. As each of the swift and tremendous blows of Alaric crippled the strength of Rome the necessity grew ever urgent for the withdrawal of the legions from the remote frontiers of the empire, and thus it came to pass that soon after the fifth century had entered upon its second decade the Roman masters of Britain sailed away from its shores for ever. So closed the first prosperous epoch in the history of Bath.

And now came the centuries of adversity. Left to their own resources after enjoying for so long the protection of Roman arms, the natives of Britain became the prey of the Saxon and Danish hordes which poured into the land

Digitized by Google

from over the North Sea. Many of these plundering bands penetrated to this fair West country and Bath itself became the centre of frequent and fierce conflict. To these years belong the exploits of arms with which romance and poetry have enhaloed the shadowy figure of Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, and some authorities have identified Bath with the prince's famous victory over the Saxons at *Mons Badonicus* in 520. But the prowess of Arthur or other native warriors was in vain; as the sixth century was waning an irresistible army of Saxons swept down on Somersetshire, overthrew the Britons at Deorham, eight miles from Bath, and firmly established Saxon ascendency where the Romans had so long made their home.

With this conquest there broke the dawn of a second era of prosperity for "the city in the warm vale." And now the Roman name of *Aquæ Solis* gradually gave way to the *Hæt Bathen* — "hot baths" — of the Saxons, to be abbreviated in the unborn centuries to the one significant word of to-day.

Save for an interregnum of misfortune during the raids of the Danes, Bath enjoyed many tokens of royal favour under the rule of the Saxons. Osric founded a convent here in 676;

Digitized by Google

Athelstan established a mint within its walls; and Edgar, in 973, chose the city as the scene of a pageant of unprecedented splendour. "Condemned by Archbishop Dunstan," so the story goes, "to atone for an offence against the church, he was restricted from wearing his crown in public for the space of seven years; but, when this ecclesiastical censure was satisfied, he selected Bath as the place where his forgiveness should be published, by the splendid and gorgeous ceremony of his coronation."

For several centuries after the Norman conquest Bath sinks into the background of English history. It emerges from obscurity for a brief space now and then, as when it was plundered by Geoffrey of Contance, and when, in 1574, it was honoured by a visit from Queen Elizabeth; but in the main the city slumbered peacefully on in its picturesque vale, untroubled by visions of the years of fame which were drawing near.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century the outward aspect of the city gave little promise of the golden era which was soon to dawn. Although it had long been the seat of a bishop, and was resorted to by the sick for its springs, Bath was then, Macaulay says, "a maze of

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

...ished a mint within its walls;
..., chose the city as the scene of
... unprecedented splendour. "Con-
... Archbishop Dunstan," so the story
... or an offence against the church,
... from wearing his crown in
... space of seven years; but, when
... censure was satisfied, he
... the place where his forgiveness
... d, by the splendid and gor-
... of his coronation."

... centuries after the Norman con-
... ks into the background of English
... emerges from obscurity for a brief
... and then, as when it was plundered
... by of Constance, and when, in 1571,
... noured by a visit from Queen Eliza-
... at in the main the city slumbered peace-
... picturesque vale, untroubled by
... years of fame which were drawing

... the close of the seventeenth century
... d aspect of the city gave little promise
... olden era which was soon to dawn.
... it had long been the seat of a bishop,
... resorted to by the sick for its springs,
... then, Macaulay says, "a maze of

Digitized by Google

BATH, FROM THE AVON.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

only four or five hundred houses, crowded within an old wall in the vicinity of the Avon. . . . That beautiful city which charms even eyes familiar with the masterpieces of Bramante and Palladio, and which the genius of Anstey and of Smollett, of Frances Burney and of Jane Austen, has made classic ground, had not begun to exist. Milsom Street itself was an open field lying far beyond the walls; and hedgerows intersected the space which is now covered by the Crescent and the Circus. The poor patients to whom the waters had been recommended lay on straw in a place which, to use the language of a contemporary physician, was a covert rather than a lodging."

Some fifty years later a marvellous change had taken place. To whom belongs the credit? or to what particular incident was it due?

Bathonians and others have been exercised with those questions for a long time. Now and then the discussion has waxed hot and furious, and it ill becomes an outsider to venture into the mêlèe. Yet a dispassionate survey of the situation reveals several instructive facts. One of these is that the visit, in 1687, of the Queen of James II. directed attention to the waters of Bath as a probable remedy for barrenness; a second is that the sojourn of Queen Anne in

Digitized by Google

1702 raised the city in social esteem; and a third introduces the claims of Beau Nash and John Wood.

Here debatable ground is reached. Social England was ripe for a change. "People of fashion," as Goldsmith relates, "had no agreeable summer retreat from the town," and the claims of Bath were handicapped by the fact that the amusements "were neither elegant, nor conducted with delicacy." Manners in general were at a discount, and "the lodgings for visitors were paltry, though expensive." Nor was this all. Such reputation as the city possessed was founded upon its healing waters, and that reputation was in serious danger. One of the leading physicians of the age, in revenge for affronts offered him at Bath, declared that he would write a pamphlet which would "cast a toad into the spring."

Such was the condition of the city at the advent of Beau Nash in 1703. That some twenty-five years later Bath had become the social centre of England, and had entered upon a century of unrivalled prosperity, is often placed to his credit. To him, it is asserted, the city "must mainly attribute the rapidity with which it sprang from an insignificant place into the

Digitized by Google

focus of fashionable life, the most ' pleasurable ' city in the Kingdom." It is well that this eulogy is qualified, but the qualification would have been more to the point had it been increased in emphasis and laid stress upon the name of John Wood. The latter was no Master of the Ceremonies; he was just a plain builder; but if destiny had not ordained his arrival on the scene at this crisis not all Nash's solemnity in " adjusting trifles " would have availed to start Bath on its career of prosperity.

Yet, in claiming justice for Wood, it is imperative that due praise be also given to another of the creators of modern Bath. Indeed, when all the facts are considered, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that this other man, Ralph Allen by name, deserves more of the credit of the city's golden era than either Nash or Wood. Allen, a son of lowly parents, was but a youth when he settled in Bath as a post office assistant. His integrity, industry and ability soon marked him out for advancement, and in 1720 he promulgated a scheme of postal service for England which, adopted by the government, yielded him a yearly income of twelve thousand pounds. He was also interested in another enterprise which had more momentous results for the city

Digitized by Google

of his adoption. Acquiring some large quarries near Bath, he conceived the idea of exploiting the peculiar stone of those quarries for building purposes, and it was in the carrying out of that scheme he called Wood to his aid. One of the greatest needs of the city was more adequate private buildings, without which the social interest in the place would speedily have died out, and that that need was met on such noble lines as are testified by the present aspect of Bath was due to the initiative of Allen aided by the executive skill of Wood and his son.

Nor should it be overlooked that in other respects Allen deserves well of Bath. Not only did he take an alert interest in its municipal government, and contribute generously to all worthy public institutions, but his love of hospitality was the means of bringing many illustrious visitors to the city. At his mansion of Prior Park he received a constant succession of famous guests, including Fielding, and Pope, and Mason, and Lord Chatham and the younger Pitt. So long as English literature endures Allen is secure in remembrance. Pope has enshrined his memory in the lines.

> "Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

Digitized by Google

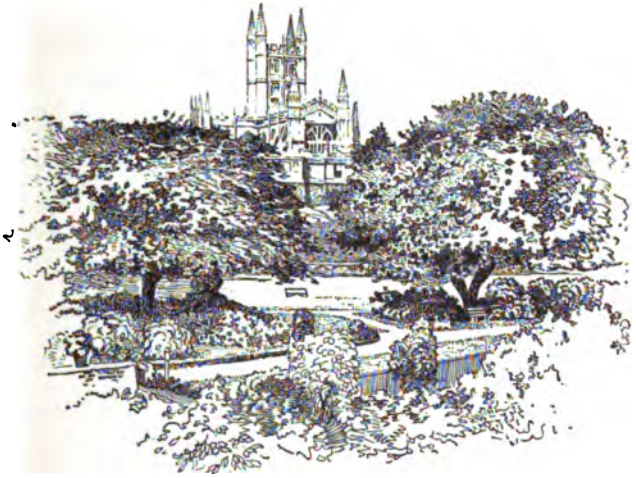
SITE OF HYPOCAUST BATH.

THE ROMAN BATHS.'

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

It is true the poet later in life grew cold towards his generous friend, and left him £150 in his will, that sum " being, to the best of my calculation, the account of what I have received from him, partly for my own, and partly for charitable uses;" but the implied satire of that bequest



BATH ABBEY

was robbed of its point by Allen remarking, " He forgot to add the other 0 to the 150," and sending the money to the city hospital.

Fielding appears to have been a frequent and ever welcome guest at Prior Park, and nobly did he repay Allen's hospitality by portraying his unselfish character in Squire Allworthy in

Digitized by Google

"Tom Jones," and by inscribing "Amelia" to him as a "small token" of his love and gratitude and respect. When the great novelist passed away, Allen undertook the charge of his children, paid for their education and remembered them generously in his will.

No one can muse upon the history of Bath from 1725 onwards without being impressed by the countless shades of illustrious men and women who appear to walk its streets and haunt its buildings. Some of these, though not the most notable, found a final resting-place in the historic Abbey, which is so densely crowded with the memorials of the dead as to excuse the epigram:

> "These walls, so full of monument and bust,
> Shew how Bath-waters serve to lay the dust."

Beau Nash is of those buried here; another is James Quin, the actor, who declared he did not know a better place than Bath for an old cock to roost in. It was from this city that Quin sent his famous note to his manager Rich. The actor had quarrelled with the manager, but in a milder mood held out a tentative olive-branch in the laconic message: "I am at Bath. Yours, James Quin," only to receive the curt reply,

Digitized by Google

"Stay there and be damned. Yours, John Rich."

Wherever the visitor wanders in these streets, streets from which the tide of fashionable life has largely receded, he cannot escape memories of the men and women who made the fame of the late eighteenth century. Thomas Gainsborough is here, so busy with his sitters that his "house became gains' borough;" and Edmund Burke, come on a last vain quest for health; and Nelson, so renewed in strength that he would have all his sick friends join him; and the young Walter Scott, who was to carry away as his most abiding impression his first experience of the theatre; and Horace Walpole, so bored with the place that he could only "sit down by the waters of Babylon and weep, when I think of thee, oh Strawberry!"; and James Wolfe, seeking strength for his enfeebled body on the eve of setting his face towards Quebec and glory; and the Countess of Huntingdon, busy with her arrogant letters to the ministers of her sect; and Oliver Goldsmith, and Samuel Johnson, and countless other immortals.

Other sons and daughters of fame were to enrich the associations of Bath in the opening half of the nineteenth century. Hither, as the

Digitized by Google

century dawned, came the gentle Jane Austen, to reap the quiet harvest of an observing eye and garner its fruits in many a later page. Nor should the solitary figure of "Vathek" Beckford be forgotten, the rich and gifted misanthrope who made so barren a use of his wealth and his genius. Late in the procession, too, comes the grand and picturesque shade of Walter Savage Landor, a familiar figure in the streets of Bath for many a year. These children of genius have all passed on, and none have succeeded them. But for their sake, and because of its storied past, Bathonia, the "city of the warm vale," will ever hold its place of pride in the annals of England.

Digitized by Google

IV

JOHN KEBLE'S HURSLEY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

JOHN KEBLE'S HURSLEY

THREE villages in the English county of Hampshire have attained a world-wide fame; in each case due to the minister of the parish; and in all three the man to whom the fame is owing sleeps in the churchyard of the hamlet he immortalized. Those three villages are Selborne, Eversley and Hursley. In the first the patient naturalist, Gilbert White, toiled for years on his famous book; in the second the stout-hearted novelist-parson, Charles Kingsley, spent many of his most fruitful years; and the third was for thirty years the loved home of England's greatest religious poet, John Keble.

But Hursley, which lies a few miles from the ancient city of Winchester, attained a quiet notoriety in English history nearly two centuries before it became the home of John Keble. Many centuries earlier still this peaceful parish commended itself to Henry de Blois, the brother of King Stephen, and here he built a castle of which some crumbling fragments still exist on his manor of Merdon. And that the early

Digitized by Google

Britons and then the Romans were not unknown in this picturesque district is proved by archeological discoveries that have been made from time to time.

Interesting, however, though it might be to dwell upon those survivals of early British and Roman days, and to follow the faint clues of Henry de Blois' connection with the parish, more tangible results can be obtained by fixing the mind on the history of Hursley from the date — 1639 — when the manor of Merdon came into the possession of one named Richard Mayor. This Richard Mayor was a son of the mayor of Southampton, and his name persists in the pages of history because it became linked with that of Oliver Cromwell.

In this way. At the opening of the year 1648 Cromwell's eldest son, Richard, was unmarried, but, having reached his twenty-first year, he and his father apparently agreed that it was time he took a life-partner. Cromwell himself was already a figure of note in the national life. The victories of Marston Moor, and Naseby, and Basing were already inscribed on the pages of history, and by this date he was the recognized leader of the Independents and as such a man of importance and influence. So notable a man,

Digitized by Google

it may readily be imagined, might easily have formed a high matrimonial alliance for his eldest son. Indeed, actual offers of such an alliance were not lacking. Cromwell himself states that he "had an offer of a very great proposition from a father of his daughter," which, although not lacking in "fairness," he had put from him because he could not see therein "that assurance of godliness" which he desired in any union for his son.

At this juncture Richard Mayor, of Hursley, appears on the scene. How he and Cromwell became acquainted is not clear; perhaps Mayor had fought in the army and so formed a friendship with Cromwell; at any rate Mayor, in the opening weeks of 1648, informed Cromwell through a mutual friend that he was not averse to a marriage between his elder daughter Dorothy and Richard Cromwell. Fifteen months later that union became an accomplished fact.

That so long an interval elapsed between the opening of the marriage negotiations and their completion must be laid to the charge of Mayor himself. Cromwell was agreeable to the match; the young people appear to have been genuinely in love with each other; but the maiden's father proved a hard bargain-driver. Carlyle char-

Digitized by Google

acterizes Mayor as "a pious prudent man." He certainly was entitled to the second adjective. Indeed, if the testimony of another dweller at Hursley is to be credited, he had claims to be described in more reprehensible terms. This witness admits that Mayor was "very witty and thrifty," but then adds that he "got more by oppressing his tenants than did all the lords (of the manor of Merdon) in sixty years before him." And in another place this local chronicler declares that when Cromwell became Protector of England Mayor took advantage of his high connection to "usurp authority over his tenants at Hursley."

Cromwell himself had ample experience of Mayor's thriftiness. Among the surviving letters of the Protector there are a round dozen in which the curious may trace the history of the negotiations for Richard Cromwell's marriage with Dorothy Mayor. Unfortunately none of Richard Mayor's epistles are in existence, but those from Cromwell's pen, written during the months when he was the leading spirit of momentous events, show that Dorothy's father employed every possible effort to use the marriage of his daughter for his own monetary gain. Indeed, Mayor, the "pious prudent man,"

Digitized by Google

proved so obstinate on matters of settlement that the negotiations were broken off and remained in abeyance for some nine months.

Meanwhile events had happened which probably appealed to the prudence if not to the piety of Richard Mayor. Cromwell had suppressed an insurrection in Wales, had defeated the Scottish Royalists at Preston, and Charles I was on the threshold of the scaffold. So the astute lord of the manor at Hursley enlisted the services of a Puritan preacher at Southampton, and through him contrived to reopen negotiations for the union of his daughter with Cromwell's heir. Cromwell himself was not unwilling. The Southampton preacher had adroitly enlarged on the "piety" of the Mayor family, whether on his own initiative or at the suggestion of Richard Mayor himself does not appear. But that was the most effectual channel to Cromwell's heart, and the negotiations thus resumed, went forward as speedily as they could under all the circumstances, and on May Day, 1649, Richard Cromwell and Dorothy Mayor were wedded at Hursley.

By the marriage contract the manor of Merdon was to descend to the children of the young couple, and it did actually remain in the Crom-

Digitized by Google

well family until 1718, when it was sold for thirty thousand pounds to the family whose descendants possess it to this day. In agreement with Richard Cromwell's own inclination for a country life, he and his wife settled at Hursley, living in the lodge of the manor house. On the testimony of his father's letters alone, and they are the letters of a partial and forbearing parent, Richard Cromwell was of an indolent disposition. An "idle fellow," Carlyle calls him, one who could never relish soldiering in his father's army, who wished above all to "retire to Arcadian felicity and wedded life in the country."

Even when Cromwell had got his son happily wedded and established in "Arcadian felicity" at Hursley he had many anxious thoughts about his mental and spiritual welfare. "I have delivered my son to you," he writes to Mayor, "and I hope you will counsel him; he will need it; and indeed I believe he likes well what you say, and will be advised by you. I wish he may be serious; the times require it." Subsequent letters from Cromwell return again and again to the same themes: "I have committed my son to you; pray give him advice. . . . I would have him mind and understand business,

Digitized by Google

read a little history, study the mathematics and cosmography." From the turmoil of his campaign in Ireland Cromwell asks for the prayers of Mayor and his family, adding, "As for Dick, I do not much expect it from him, knowing his idleness;" and later he bids Dick himself "Take heed of an unactive spirit! Recreate yourself with Sir Walter Raleigh's History; it's a body of History; and will add much more to your understanding than fragments of story." Although Cromwell had matters enough to occupy his attention, he often snatched a few minutes to indite an epistle to Hursley, but the lethargic and unoccupied Dick seldom took an answering pen in hand. Dorothy Cromwell seems to have caught the infection too, or why this rebuke of her father-in-law: "They are at leisure to write often; but indeed they are both idle, and worthy of blame?"

Richard's mother visited him and his young wife at Hursley, but his illustrious father was never able to do so. Despite that fact the village stores its tradition of the Protector, who, according to that legend, "sunk his treasure at the bottom of Merdon Well, in an iron chest which must have been enchanted, for, on an endeavour to draw it up, no one was to speak. One work-

Digitized by Google

man unfortunately said, 'Here it comes,' when it immediately sunk to the bottom and (this is quite true) never was seen!"

Notwithstanding his father's iterated and reiterated exhortations to study, to industry and to other commendable occupations of his time, Richard Cromwell allowed the days and weeks and months at Hursley to slip by unprofitably. He even plunged into debt, thereby earning the rebuke of his father, who exclaimed, "God forbid that his being my son should be his allowance to live not pleasingly to our heavenly Father." But Richard Cromwell was as he was; he could not do otherwise than "make pleasures the business of his life;" and thus, when his masterful father passed away, there was scarcely any man in all England so little fit as he to take the Protector's place. He became, it is true, "the phantom king of half a year," but when the Rump Parliament demanded his resignation his essential weakness of character was revealed in his quiet acceptance of the situation. No doubt he was thankful to be able to retire to Hursley again, but the quietness of his retreat was soon broken by demands for the payment of his father's debts, and shortly after he sought safety in flight to the continent. His wife, however,

Digitized by Google

continued to reside at Hursley until her death in 1675.

Of Richard Cromwell's presence at Hursley there is only one surviving memorial. The lime-trees which make such a picturesque belt of verdure around the churchyard are said to have been planted by him. One other possible memento Carlyle dismisses thus: "In pulling down the old Hursley House, above a century since, when the estate had passed into other hands, there was found in some crevice of the old walls a rusty lump of metal, evidently an antiquity; which was carried to the new proprietor at Winchester; who sold it as 'a Roman weight,' for what it would bring. When scoured, it turned out, — or is said by vague Noble, quoting vague 'Vertue,' 'Hughes's Letters,' and 'Ant. Soc.' (Antiquarian Society), to have turned out, — to be the Great Seal of the Commonwealth. If the Antiquarians still have it, let them be chary of it."

One hundred and seventy-six years after Richard Cromwell married Dorothy Mayor there came to Hursley as curate of the parish a young minister named John Keble. At that time his personal worth and unusual gifts were known to but a few; to-day his saintly character

Digitized by Google

and the fruits of his poetic genius are among the choicest treasures of the English Church.

Keble's first sojourn at Hursley as a curate lasted rather less than a year. His acceptance of that position was due to the persuasion of the lord of the manor, Sir William Heathcote, who had been his pupil at Oxford. Hence his surroundings were wholly enjoyable. "The society at Hursley itself, and its neighbourhood, and especially that which would, of course, gather from time to time at Hursley Park; the renewal of his familiar intercourse with his favourite old pupil; the character of the country around him, dry and healthy, a pleasant interchange of breezy down and picturesque woodland, hill and valley, the New Forest, Southampton, and the sea at a convenient distance" — such were his advantages. His friends soon found him out in this ideal retreat; he tried "the coozie powers of the Hursley air" on them, and welcomed, among others, his college companion, Thomas Arnold, who was afterwards to win fame as the great schoolmaster of Rugby. But a death in Keble's family, which laid upon him, as he thought, the responsibility of brightening his father's declining years with his companionship, made him resign his cure.

Digitized by Google

GRAVES OF JOHN KEBLE AND HIS WIFE.

HURSLEY CHURCH.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Some ten years later the death of that greatly-loved father coincided with a vacancy in the Hursley living and opened the way for his return thither as vicar of the parish. This was in 1836 and for thirty years thereafter Hursley was the home of Keble and the harvest-field of his labours.

Nine years prior to his return to Hursley Keble had given "The Christian Year" to the world. In the annals of literature that book of sacred verses is, of course, his most abiding memorial, but in the peaceful village of his active ministry as a priest the church itself in its stones and mortar must always perpetuate his name.

At the time he was appointed vicar here he found the church, erected in the eighteenth century, wholly unadapted for such ceremonials as should, in his opinion, characterize the services of the Church of England. For nine years he laboured on amid the depressing conditions of that barn-like building, and then he came to the conclusion that "the irreverence and other mischiefs caused by the present state of Hursley Church" left him no option save to attempt the entire rebuilding of the edifice.

Such an undertaking, however, seemed likely to prove too heavy a burden for the people of a

Digitized by Google

poor rural parish. The original estimate for the work Keble thought necessary amounted to three thousand three hundred and eighty pounds, and there were only two or three among the parishioners whose means would allow them to contribute any material help in raising that sum. Having surveyed all the conditions, the vicar came to the resolve to meet himself the entire expense of the rebuilding, and his next step was to consider how he could most easily raise the necessary sum.

Keble's first thought was to publish his "Lyra Innocentium" in the interests of his building-fund, but when he discovered that such a scheme was not quite so feasible as he imagined, he turned for help to "The Christian Year." That volume had been enormously successful. In little more than twenty years no fewer than forty-three editions had been called for, representing more than a hundred thousand copies. Throughout the author's life, the sale of the volume never flagged; and during the nine months that succeeded his death, seven editions of eleven thousand copies were sold. It is obvious, then, that in the copyright of "The Christian Year" Keble possessed a valuable asset, and that asset he expressed his willingness

Digitized by Google

to relinquish in return for such a sum as would enable him to pay for the rebuilding of Hursley Church.

At this juncture three of his friends intervened. They very stoutly opposed the idea that Keble should sell his copyright. For one thing, they did not think any publisher would be prepared to offer a full equivalent; and they were convinced that "The Christian Year" was exactly the kind of work which ought to remain as long as possible in the author's own hands, and under his control. In order, then, to save Keble from making this sacrifice, his friends proposed to supply him with money as he should want it for the rebuilding of the church, their only condition being that the copyright of the book should in the meantime be regarded as their property as security. Even this arrangement did not for a moment involve Keble in parting with his copyright legally, for his friends did not dream of asking for any formal agreement or legal assignment of the work. It was merely an understanding between four high-minded men, one of whom undertook the business part of arranging the terms for each edition of the book as it was called for, and receiving the price. "No doubt," wrote one who was a party to

Digitized by Google

this honourable transaction, "this was a convenience to Keble, and set his mind free from all anxiety; but it was no inconvenience to us, nor ultimate loss. Keble sacrificed for the time the income he had used to derive from this source, but he never lost the ownership of the book;

HURSLEY VICARAGE

and the beneficial property returned to him when the account was cleared."

Fortunate, indeed, was it for the Hursley vicar that such an arrangement was made. The cost of rebuilding greatly exceeded the original estimate. Instead of three thousand three hundred and eighty pounds, the bill totalled up to six thousand pounds, and if the copyright of "The

Digitized by Google

Christian Year" had been disposed of on the basis of the smaller sum, there would have been a heavy deficit to meet. Instead, as has been shown, the three friends continued to advance funds as they were called for, and were able to repay themselves from the sales of the book. Thus Hursley Church, from its foundation to its vane, is the honourable memorial of John Keble.

At the edge of the churchyard, from which it is separated by a low wall, stands the vicarage which was Keble's happy home for thirty years. Many famous men and women have passed within its doors, but the most memorable meeting of which these walls have been the witness took place less than five months before Keble's death. In his young manhood E. B. Pusey and John Henry Newman had been numbered among his most intimate friends. They had laboured together zealously at the dawn of the High Church movement. Then followed the parting of the ways. Newman found that he could not remain in the English Church, and the letter in which he announced his decision to enter the Church of Rome came to Keble at Hursley, to be taken by him for opening and sad perusal in a quiet deserted chalk-pit of his parish. For years

Digitized by Google

thereafter the three never met, and then, on the eve of Keble's death, a strange chance brought them together under his roof at Hursley.

Newman himself gives the following tender account of that memorable meeting. "Keble was at his door speaking to a friend. He did not know me, and asked my name. What was more wonderful, since I had purposely come to his house, I did not know him, and I feared to ask who it was. I gave him my card without speaking. When at length we found out each other, he said, with that tender flurry of manner which I recollected so well, that his wife had been seized with an attack of her complaint that morning, and that he could not receive me as he should wish to do; nor, indeed, had he expected me; for 'Pusey,' he whispered, 'is in the house, as you are aware.' Then he brought me into his study, and embraced me most affectionately, and said he would go and prepare Pusey, and send him to me. I got there in the forenoon, and remained with him four or five hours, dining at one or two. He was in and out of the room all the time I was with him, attending to his wife, and I was left with Pusey. I recollect very little of the conversation that passed at dinner. Pusey was full of the question

Digitized by Google

of the inspiration of Holy Scripture, and Keble expressed his joy that it was a common cause, in which I could not substantially differ from them; and he caught at such words of mine as seemed to show agreement. . . . Just before my time for going, Pusey went to read the evening service in church, and I was alone in the open air with Keble by himself. We walked a little way, and stood looking in silence at the church and churchyard, so beautiful and calm. Then he began to converse with me in more than his old tone of intimacy, as if we had never parted; and soon I was obliged to go."

But a few months later, as has been said, Keble was laid to rest in that churchyard "so beautiful and calm." It was not in this picturesque vicarage that he died, but in apartments at Bournemouth, whither he had gone for the sake of his wife's health. His own illness lasted but a week, and was brought on by rising too early, by taking a cold instead of a warm bath, and then, without having tasted food, standing by his wife's bed to read the lessons for the day until he collapsed in a dead faint. When he had passed away, his dying widow bade her friends assemble in her own room, and then, taking a copy of "The Christian Year," and

Digitized by Google

turning to the stanzas for Good Friday, she told them how assuredly she felt that her husband's last aspiration had been —

> "O call Thy wanderer home;
> To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
> Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide."

Six weeks after Mrs. Keble herself passed away, and was laid in the grave which nestles closely beside that of her husband. Than these two graves there are few which speak more eloquently of ideal wedded love.

Digitized by Google

V

OATLANDS PARK

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OATLANDS PARK

HARDLY in all England are there fifty acres which can hope to compete in varied interest with those which comprise the famous Oatlands Park in Surrey. Here some of the most illustrious personages of the Royal House of England have had a home; here the most notable of the ladies who have borne the title of the Duchess of York nursed the sombre thought of a blighted life; here the Princess Charlotte passed that honeymoon which was by such a short space removed from the tomb; here may be found the most wonderful grotto in England; here the most picturesque dogs' cemetery known to the history of canine sepulture; and here men whose names are written high on the scroll of literary fame have committed to paper some of their most deathless work.

Oatlands, as hinted above, has had many Royal owners. The first to cast envious eyes on these richly-wooded glades was the masterful

Digitized by Google

Henry VIII, and in his days a king had only to hint a desire to break the tenth commandment and that which he coveted was his. Oatlands, the much-married Henry thought, would make an admirable addition to the adjacent Chace of Hampton, and the rightful owner promptly handed over the title-deeds in favour of another stretch of land in a less enviable neighbourhood.

Next in ownership of Oatlands came "Good Queen Bess," who is credited with having practised the masculine art of crossbow shooting in these meadows, and who certainly kept court here on many occasions. The Queen of Charles I followed, and then came Anne of Denmark, the Duke of Newcastle, and, lastly, the Duke of York, the second son of George III. The two dukes, as we shall see, are still linked with the history of Oatlands Park.

A Royal palace of goodly area was once embowered amid these lusty trees. It has vanished, even to the last stone, and the only record left of its existence is one of those quaint, perspective-defying plans upon which the draughtsmen of the olden time lavished so much painful labour. Even of the building first inhabited by the Duke of York nothing remains, a fire having swept it away a few years after the

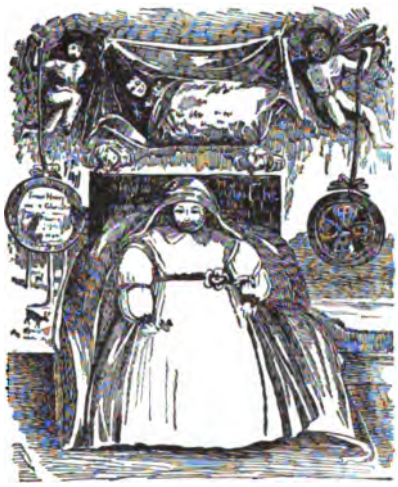
Digitized by Google

CEDARS OF LEBANON, OATLANDS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

property came into his possession. Part of the new mansion he built in its place still survives at the rear of the present structure, and here may yet be seen and dwelt in the rooms occupied by the Princess Charlotte.



PRINCE HENRY OF OATLANDS

It was, as has been noted, as a bride on her honeymoon that the Princess Charlotte, in 1816, came to Oatlands. As the idol of the nation and the heir to the English throne her future career promised nothing but happiness. According to the testimony of the Comtesse de Boigne, who met her on intimate terms on several occasions, the Princess possessed a character of marked individuality. She affected the brusque manners attributed to Queen Elizabeth, even to the adoption of that monarch's oaths, and would probably have caused some consternation among the ministers of the English government

Digitized by Google

had she succeeded to the throne. She declared that she would not and could not rule over England except on the condition that her husband should reign with her. "He shall be King or I never will be Queen." Of her personal appearance the Comtesse gives this picture: "Of her figure I can say nothing. All that could be seen was that she was tall and strongly made. Her hair was fair almost to the point of whiteness, and her eyes were porcelain blue; eyelashes and eyebrows were invisible, and her complexion was uniformly white, without colour. The reader may cry, 'What insipidity! It must have been a very inexpressive face.' Nothing of the kind. I have rarely observed a face of greater alertness and mobility; her look was most expressive."

Most of the figures who loom large in the court history of George IV have slept under this roof and disported themselves on these lawns. Of course the King's brother, Thackeray's "big, burly, loud, jolly, cursing, courageous" Duke of York, was often here. But, though owner of Oatlands, he seems, when his affection for the Duchess cooled, to have used the place merely and mainly as a week-end resort. All that even Sir Walter Scott could say, despite that purblind loyalty which made him so val-

Digitized by Google

OLD PORTION OF OATLANDS MANSION.

THE DOGS' CEMETERY, OATLANDS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

iant a champion of the worthless Regent, was that the Duke of York lived with his Duchess "on terms of decency, but not of affection."

He is not a very clearly-defined figure on the page of history, that same Duke of York, yet there is one story told of him which leaves a pleasant memory. Mounting his horse one morning at the door of Oatlands he saw a poorly-clad woman slowly wending her way down the avenue. "Who is that?" he demanded of a servant near by. "Nobody, your Royal Highness, but a soldier's wife a-begging." "And pray, sir," rejoined the Duke, "what is your mistress?"

Beau Brummel, too, "favourite, rival, enemy, superior" of George IV, as Thackeray terms him, was often a guest at Oatlands. The Duchess had a great liking for the poor Beau, and he diplomatically cultivated her regard by an occasional present of a dog, the surest way to that lonely woman's heart.

Hither also often came Charles Greville, the industrious compiler of those fascinating "Memoirs;" and Oatlands and its strange medley of life in the early years of the last century may be repictured from his pages. The week-end parties were often large, and one of the

Digitized by Google

principal amusements of the guests was to sit up playing whist till four o'clock in the morning. "On Sundays," he continues, "we amused ourselves with eating fruit in the garden, and shooting at a mark with pistols, and playing with the monkeys. I bathed in the cold bath in the grotto, which is as clear as crystal and as cold as ice. Oatlands is the worst managed establishment in England: there are a great many servants, and nobody waits on you; a vast number of horses, and none to ride or drive."

On another visit Greville set himself the task of painting his hostess. "The Duchess," he noted in that capacious diary of his, "seldom goes to bed, or, if she does, only for an hour or two; she sleeps dressed upon a couch, sometimes in one room, sometimes in another. She frequently walks out very late at nights, or rather early in the morning, and she always sleeps with open windows. She dresses and breakfasts at three o'clock, afterwards walks out with all her dogs, and seldom appears before dinner-time. At night, when she cannot sleep, she has women to read to her. The Duchess of York is clever and well informed; she likes society, and dislikes all form and ceremony; but in the midst of the most familiar intercourse she always preserves

Digitized by Google

a certain dignity of manner. Those who are in the habit of going to Oatlands are perfectly at their ease with her, and talk with as much freedom as they would to any other woman, but always with great respect. Her mind is not perhaps the most delicate; she shows no dislike to coarseness of sentiment or language, and I have often seen her very much amused with jokes, stories, and allusions which would shock a very nice person. But her own conversation is never polluted with anything the least indelicate or unbecoming. She is very sensible to little attentions, and is annoyed if anybody appears to keep aloof from her or to shun conversing with her. Her dogs are her greatest interest and amusement, and she has at least forty of various kinds. She is delighted when anybody gives her a dog, or a monkey, or a parrot, of all of which she has vast numbers; it is impossible to offend or annoy her more than by ill-using any of her dogs, and if she were to see anybody beat or kick any one of them she would never forgive it."

Not often did the foppish Regent darken the doors of his sister-in-law at Oatlands. He took no pains, "first gentleman of Europe," though his flatterers termed him, to conceal his dislike

Digitized by Google

of his brother's choice, and the Duchess, on her part, returned the sentiment with interest. That, at any rate, is one fact to be placed to her credit.

But though the Regent was not fond of the mistress of Oatlands, the grotto in her grounds, which was erected by the Duke of Newcastle at a cost of forty thousand pounds, appealed to his taste with irresistible force. It would, to a man who was the cause of so many countless thousands being spent on his gaudy Pavilion at Brighton. One of the chambers in this Oatlands grotto was once put by the Regent to a notable use. Here, in the apartment now known as the Duchess' boudoir, he gave a lavish supper to the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and other princely warriors, after the battle of Waterloo, and in celebration of that memorable victory. In its present carpetless and rather earthy condition, this unique chamber hardly rises to the reputation which its primary cost creates in in the mind; but it is easy to imagine what a transformation it might undergo if it were placed for a few hours in the hands of an upholsterer with artistic tastes.

At first sight it seems hardly credible that the Duke of Newcastle can have squandered forty

Digitized by Google

thousand pounds on the Oatlands grotto, even although it did give occupation to three builders for twenty years. There are, however, more apartments in this amorphous structure than a casual inspection would lead one to imagine. Beneath the apartment in which the Regent gave his Waterloo supper is a chamber known as the Duchess of York's bath-room, where Charles Greville had his ice-cold tub, and where the Duchess was wont to superintend the ablutions of those dogs who lie so quietly now in the graveyard outside. A winding passage leads from one corner of the bath-room to the gaming-saloon, where the visitor stumbles across the one association of the Duke of York with the grotto. It is not an association to his honour. In this hidden chamber, where the light of the outer world struggles vainly with the inner darkness, where the perfumes of flowers and the songs of birds do not penetrate, the Duke of York squandered his inheritance on the gambler's table. A few yards away there is a cave-like chamber such as might be the abode of genii able to restore the lost gold for the recompense of a human soul. As the visitor reaches this limit of his quest, he realizes that no artist in weird sensations could have devised a more fitting climax.

Digitized by Google

For all the associations of the Regent's Waterloo supper, and the gambling revelry of the Duke of York, it is the presence of the Duchess of York and her dumb companions which most dominates this peaceful grotto now. She, poor soul, the "small, fair lady" whom the Comtesse de Boigne always remembered, has been dead these eighty years, and lies in the churchyard yonder under a massive Chantry monument. On the village green close by stands a lofty column inscribed with her virtues, a record which only a stray passer-by stops now and then to read. And her dogs sleep on, too, beneath the tiny tombstones which stud the grass around the grotto.

THE DUCHESS OF YORK

Perhaps it is easy to read what the world calls eccentricity into that character-sketch of the Duchess which Greville gives, and especially into

Digitized by Google

that wholesale devotion to the canine race of which he speaks. But would it not be wiser to pause and consider the excuses there may have been in this case? A native of another land — the Duchess was born Princess Royal of Prussia — mated to a husband whose intrigues with a mistress were the talk of the town and the burden of debate in the House of Commons; condemned to pass countless solitary hours in her Surrey home; it is hardly surprising that she should turn for consolation elsewhere. And, in that event, what wiser choice could she have made for companionship than that of

> The poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
> The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
> Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
> Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone?

As these faithful companions of the solitary woman passed away one by one they were honoured with burial and headstone in that sheltered little dell which dips down behind the Oatlands grotto. It is a resting-place which might make man himself "half in love with easeful death." Only two of the tombstones bear anything in the nature of an epitaph; the rest are simply inscribed with a name. The

Digitized by Google

longest epitaph is that "To the Memory of Julia," which reads thus:

> Here Julia rests, and here each day
> Her mistress strews her grave with flowers,
> Mourning her death, whose frolic play
> Enlivened oft the lonesome hours.
> From Denmark did her race descend,
> Beauteous her form and mild her spirit;
> Companion gay, and faithful friend —
> May ye who read have half her merit.

Among the most notable associations which Oatlands has gathered to itself in years nearer our own day must be recorded the facts that here Motley laboured at certain parts of his "Dutch Republic," and that here Zola found a secure hiding-place when France was in hue and cry after the writer of *J'accuse*. Motley has not recorded his opinion of the Oatlands grotto and dogs' cemetery, but Zola has. The grotto had no attractions for him, but he often found his way to the little cemetery at its side. It reminded him of the green islet in the Seine at Médan, where he buried his own dumb companions, and of the faithful dog who had pined and died because he heard his master's footsteps no more.

Digitized by Google

VI

POETS' CORNER

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

POETS' CORNER

FROM Chaucer to Tennyson! Between those two names, separated by five hundred years, lies the splendid story of English literature as it is summed up in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. What a shrine for the devout literary pilgrim! Here he may stand beside the dust of that poet who ushered in the dawn of English literature, and while he does so his feet are above the grave of him who was its latter-day glory.

Between these two, what suns and stars have swum into the firmament of English verse and prose! Not all have had their setting in this proud minster; the greatest of the band sleeps beside his own Avon, and others of the mighty dead are scattered here and there not only over the fair face of that land whose inner life they interpreted but also in the soil of the great Republic of the West. Here, however, are laid to rest, or have memorial, the chief of those who have raised the stately fane of English

Digitized by Google

literature; here, carved in stone, are the names of those who have left their impress most deeply upon the English-speaking race.

Those who laid Chaucer in his grave in this south transept of the Abbey were the true though unconscious founders of the Poets' Corner. They buried wiser than they knew. Standing, as he does, the earliest commanding figure in English literature, how seemly it was that Chaucer should be the first to consecrate this part of the national Valhalla as the resting place of the poets.

Yet it appears to have been merely an accident which led to the burial within these walls of him who told the Canterbury Tales. In other words, it was not because he was a poet that Chaucer found his resting place beside the dust of kings, but because, for a brief season, he was one of the officials of the Abbey. Although he had enjoyed the favour of three Kings, although John of Gaunt had been his constant patron, although he had been entrusted with several important diplomatic missions, Chaucer's old age was overshadowed by poverty. It was at that period of his life that he held for a short time the office of clerk of the works at Westminster, and it is to that fact, and also to his having

Digitized by Google

breathed his last in an old house in the monastery garden, that his interment within the Abbey is to be attributed. The men of those times could not have been fully conscious of the greatness of him who had passed away. For a century and a half Chaucer's only memorial was a rude slab of lead inscribed with his name; it was not until 1555 that Nicholas Brigham, a brother of the muse, caused the present tomb and canopy to be placed over that honoured dust. Some three hundred years later, that is in 1868, Dr. Rogers had the window above the monument filled with stained glass representing scenes from the poet's life and works. So through long generations does Chaucer evoke the heart-love of his countrymen.

"In the poetical quarter," wrote Addison in his famous essay on the Abbey, "I found that there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets." Shakespeare is an example of the last statement; Beaumont of the first — for he lies under a nameless stone. But from Shakespeare's time onwards, monument or no monument, it came to be recognized that in this south transept was the fitting sepulchre of the nation's chief singers, and if circumstances did not always allow of their

Digitized by Google

actual burial here, it was still possible to record their fame by storied urn or sculptured bust. And so we have the glorious Poets' Corner of to-day. It is true there are some names missing from the scroll of fame kept within this narrow space, and the absence of several of those names may give the pilgrim pause. There is Pope, for example — why has he no memorial here? Because he desired none. It was his wish to be buried by the side of his mother in Twickenham Church, and his epitaph in that building, written by himself, records that it is "For one that would not be buried in Westminster Abbey." But the absentees are not numerous, and he who is well read in all the verse suggested by the names on these walls is to be envied his knowledge of English poetry.

As in the case of Chaucer, the accident that death overtook Spenser in the vicinity of the Abbey rather than in his Irish home was no doubt the chief cause why the author of "The Faerie Queene" was laid to rest close beside the chronicler of "The Canterbury Tales." Spenser had come to London as the bearer of an official dispatch from Ireland, and made his headquarters at a tavern in King Street, Westminster, the inns of which were the usual resort of messen-

Digitized by Google

POETS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

gers to the Court. Here it was appointed he should die, not in poverty as Ben Jonson would have us believe, but outworn by the burden of those distressing experiences which had overwhelmed him in his Irish home. Conscious of his approaching end, so the legend runs, Spenser asked that his resting place might be near the dust of Chaucer; and the original inscription on his monument, obliterated many years ago, definitely noted that his sepulture in that spot was due to the proximity of Chaucer's grave.

It was at the charge of the Earl of Essex that Spenser was buried, and tradition tells how he was followed to his tomb by a great company of poets, who cast their elegies on his coffin and the pens with which they had been written. Jonson, and Beaumont, and Fletcher, and most likely Shakespeare too, were of the band. Queen Elizabeth gave orders for the erection of a costly tomb for the poet who had shed such lustre over her own person and reign, but official jealousy and "curst avarice" robbed "our Colin" of that monument. Twenty years later, however, the Duchess of Dorset supplied the omission, and when that memorial fell into decay a century and a half later the poet Mason

Digitized by Google

raised a subscription which resulted in the erection of the present monument.

Some fifteen years after he had followed Spenser to his grave Francis Beaumont was laid to his too-early rest in this sacred spot. His dust lies under a nameless stone, for no brother of the muse or noble patron thought fit to raise a memorial to his fame. Bishop Corbet, however, composed an epitaph to his memory, the moral of which will be missed unless it is remembered that Beaumont was not thirty years old when he died.

> He that hath such acuteness and such wit
> As would ask ten good heads to husband it: —
> He that can write so well that no man dare
> Refuse it for the best, — let him beware!
> Beaumont is dead! by whose sole death appears
> Wit's a disease consumes men in few years!

Goldsmith, it will be remembered, makes his intelligent Chinaman exclaim, while on a tour of the Poets' Corner, "Drayton! I never heard of him before." Yet when, in 1631, the author of "The Poly-Olbion" joined Chaucer and Spenser and Beaumont he was held in as high repute as either of the three. Fuller coupled Michael Drayton with Spenser and described the two as "a pair of royal poets, enough almost

Digitized by Google

to make passengers' feet to move metrically, who go over the place where so much poetical dust is interred." Another eulogist declared that the name of Drayton alone was sufficient to give England poetical equality with the land of Dante and Petrarch!

Probably "The Poly-Olbion" was mainly accountable for Drayton's remarkable contemporary fame. Certainly it was an amazing undertaking for a writer to narrate in verse those facts and curiosities of geographical antiquities which are now presented more suitably in prose. He took for his theme the rivers, mountains, forests and other parts of Great Britain, and devoted such immense labour to the acquisition of his materials that his poem is still a mine of reliable information. A part of his reward was to be eulogized in such strains as these:

> Drayton, sweet ancient Bard, his Albion sung,
> With their own praise her echoing Valleys rung;
> His bounding Muse o'er ev'ry mountain rode.
> And ev'ry river warbled where he flow'd.

How confident his contemporaries were of his abiding fame is evident from the glowing epitaph on his tomb:

> Do, pious marble, let thy readers know
> What they and what their children owe

Digitized by Google

To Drayton's name, whose sacred dust
We recommend unto thy trust.
Protect his memory and preserve his story;
Remain a lasting monument of his glory.
And when thy ruins shall disclaim
To be the treasurer of his name,
His name, that cannot fade, shall be
An everlasting monument to thee.

Yet, such are the vicissitudes of literary judgment, Drayton's works were forgotten "before his monument is worn out," and many a modern visitor to Poets' Corner may excusably repeat the exclamation of Goldsmith's Chinaman.

Far otherwise is it with Ben Jonson, whose bust, had it life, could shake hands with that of the forgotten Drayton. But the dust of the two poets is in no danger of mingling, for Jonson was buried not in Poets' Corner but in the north aisle of the nave. There, in one of of his meditative wanderings, Hawthorne suddenly found it. "Lingering through one of the aisles," he writes, "I happened to look down, and found my foot upon a stone inscribed with this familiar exclamation, 'O rare Ben Jonson!' and remembered the story of stout old Ben's burial in that spot, standing upright — not, I presume, on account of any unseemly reluctance

Digitized by Google

on his part to lie down in the dust, like other men, but because standing-room was all that could reasonably be demanded for a poet among the slumberous notabilities of his age. It made me weary to think of it! — such a prodigious length of time to keep one's feet! — apart from the honour of the thing, it would certainly have been better for Ben to stretch himself at ease in some country churchyard."

Several stories are told to account for Jonson being buried in such an unusual position. One credits the dramatist with asking a favour of Charles I. "What is it?" demanded the King. "Eighteen inches of square ground," rejoined Jonson. "Where?" asked the King. "In Westminster Abbey." Another version asserts that the poet wished to be so buried that he might be in readiness for the Resurrection; and a third relates a conversation between Jonson and the Dean of the Abbey, in which, on being rallied by the Dean about his being buried in Poets' Corner, Jonson said he was too poor to purchase a resting place there. "No, sir," said the poet, "six feet long by two feet wide is too much for me: two feet by two will do for all I want." To which the Dean rejoined, "You shall have it."

Digitized by Google

Whatever the cause, it is indisputable that Jonson was buried in an upright position. When the ground next his grave was opened in 1849 to prepare for another burial, the clerk of the works " saw the two leg-bones of Jonson, fixed bolt upright in the sand, as though the body had been buried in an upright position; and the skull came rolling down among the sand, from a position above the leg-bones, to the bottom of the newly-made grave. There was still hair upon it, and it was of a red colour."

Less enduring than the fame of Jonson is that of Abraham Cowley, though he, like Drayton, went to his grave amid the high plaudits of his own age. Milton is said to have bracketed Cowley with Shakespeare and Spenser as the three greatest poets of England; even the dissolute Charles II when informed of his death said he " had not left a better man in England; " and his epitaph, after comparing the poet with Pindar, Virgil and Horace, attributed the immunity of the Abbey from the great Fire of London to the fact that it contained Cowley's grave. Thus:

> That sacrilegious fire (which did last year
> Level those piles which Piety did rear)

Digitized by Google

Dreaded near that majestic church to fly,
Where English Kings and English poets lie.
It at an awful distance did expire,
Such pow'r had sacred ashes o'er that fire;
Such as it durst not near that structure come
Which fate had order'd to be Cowley's tomb;
And 'twill be still preserved, by being so,
From what the rage of future flames can do.
Material fire dares not that place infest,
Where he who had immortal flame does rest.
There let his urn remain, for it was fit
Among our Kings to lay the King of Wit.

As was the case with several of his predecessors, "glorious John Dryden" passed from a death-bed of poverty to the companionship of kings. Elaborate preparations had been made for his funeral by the Dean, who had "the Abbey lighted, the ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready set, and himself waiting." But there was no corpse. An infamous prank by the son of Lord Jeffries was responsible for this untoward incident, which was extenuated by the author on the plea that he did it to make the funeral more splendid!

So empty was Dryden's purse when he died that it became necessary to raise a fund to pay for his obsequies, but that service was readily

Digitized by Google

undertaken, and twelve days after the poet's death his body was taken first to the College of Physicians, where it was honoured by a Latin eulogy, and then to the ancient Abbey, whither it was kept company by " an abundance of the quality, in their coaches and six horses," who, to the accompaniment of funeral music, chanted the Ode of Horace: *Exegi monumentum aere perennius.*

Something of the perplexity which had distressed Dryden in his choice of a religion perturbed his eulogists in deciding upon his epitaph. Pope and Atterbury divided the labour between them, their efforts being devoted to discovering the most suitable inscription for the monument which Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, undertook to erect. Atterbury offered a Latin epitaph, but varied it with the following lines:

> This Sheffield rais'd to Dryden's ashes just,
> Here fixed his name, and there his laurel'd bust;
> What else the Muse in marble might express,
> Is known already; praise would make him less.

Pope, however, was able to improve upon Atterbury's effort in the following couplet:

> This Sheffield raised: the sacred dust below
> Was Dryden's once — the rest who does not know?

Digitized by Google

Even that brief encomium, however, eventually gave place to the present simple inscription.

How truly the Abbey is the "temple of reconciliation and peace" is not alone illustrated by the close proximity of the dust of Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, but also by the fact that Dryden's bust looks across to that of his one-time rival, Thomas Shadwell, the poet of whom he wrote:

> Others to some faint meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Shadwell represents those monuments which have no poets, for he was not buried in the Abbey.

Could Milton revisit the earth with his principles unchanged he would probably be surprised to find himself commemorated in a building so linked with the traditions of royalty. His body was not buried here, it is true, and the author of "Paradise Lost" had been in his grave more than sixty years before the growth of his fame and the decay of prejudice made it possible for his medallion to find a place on these walls. Some thirty years earlier an innocent effort to introduce Milton's name in an inscription to another poet prompted a royalist

Digitized by Google

Dean of the time to exercise his authority in erasing the obnoxious name. But Addison opened the eyes of England to the superb genius of Milton, and such was the change of opinion, as Dr. Gregory told Dr. Johnson, that he had "seen erected in the church a bust of the man whose name I once knew considered as a pollution of its walls."

Many poets besides Milton have had to wait long years for recognition in Poets' Corner. There was Samuel Butler, for example, the author of "Hudibras," who, buried elsewhere, had no memorial here until half a century after his death; and Coleridge, whose bust was the gift of an American admirer, Dr. Mercer, fifty years after the poet was buried at Highgate; and Addison, who had no monument in Poets' Corner until ninety years after he had passed away.

Varied as are the conceits, couched in sonorous Latin or quaint English, which adorn some of these memorials, the most curious and the best-known epitaph is to be found on the tomb of John Gay, whose "Fables" and "The Beggar's Opera" still keep his memory alive. "If a stone shall mark the place of my grave," he wrote to Pope, "see these words put upon it:

Digitized by Google

" ' Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it.' "

Pope saw that his friend's wish was respected, but he added an epitaph of his own, perhaps the most affectionate and sincere of all his posthumous eulogies:

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child:
With native humour temp'ring virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:
Above temptation, in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the great:
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblam'd thro' life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with Kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms — Here lies Gay.

Although the Abbey is richly sown with the dust of Kings and Queens, although here rest many famous statesmen of high renown, although this is the sepulchre of illustrious warriors, of great nobles, of immortal musicians, of men and women who have won fame which will never die, there is no part of the sacred building which appeals so tenderly to the heart of the

Digitized by Google

pilgrim as Poets' Corner. Herein is the reward of him who devotes himself to singing a nation's songs, to writing that "universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself." He may not win a great success in life, he may even feed the flame of his genius at the expense of the body in which it has a being. Like Chaucer, and Spenser, and too many others, he may pass to his grave in poverty or sorrow. But the crown is his at last — the crown of a nation's love. "Notwithstanding the simplicity of these memorials," wrote Washington Irving, "I have always observed that the visitors to the Abbey remained the longest about them. A kinder and fonder feeling takes the place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze upon the monuments of the great and heroic."

Hawthorne had the same feeling. "It seemed to me," he reflected, "that I had always been familiar with the spot. Enjoying a humble intimacy — and how much of my life had else been a dreary solitude! — with many of its inhabitants, I could not feel myself a stranger there. It was delightful to be among them. There was a genial awe, mingled with a sense of kind and friendly presences about me; and I

Digitized by Google

was glad, moreover, at finding so many of them there together, in fit companionship, mutually recognized and duly honoured, all reconciled now, whatever distant generations, whatever personal hostility or other miserable impediment, had divided them asunder while they lived. I have never felt a similar interest in any other tombstones, nor have I ever been deeply moved by the imaginary presence of other famous dead people. A poet's ghost is the only one that survives for his fellow-mortals, after his bones are in the dust — and he not ghostly, but cherishing many hearts with his own warmth in the chilliest atmosphere of life. What other fame is worth aspiring for? Or, let me speak it more boldly, what other long-enduring fame can exist? We neither remember nor care anything for the past, except as the poet has made it intelligibly noble and sublime to our comprehension."

If it be such an inspiration to visit the grave of but one poet, how much more uplifting is it to stand amid the tombs of so many! So great is the stress of life in these modern days, so many are the voices clamouring at our ears, that we need every possible incentive to turn our minds to the golden wealth of thought which these poets have garnered for us with much travail. As we

Digitized by Google

stand beside their graves we can make no more worthy resolve than that which will pledge us to a rightful use of the inheritance they have left. So shall we weave for each dead singer the wreath he would love best to wear.

Digitized by Google

VII

ROYALTY IN WAX

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ROYALTY IN WAX

EXCEEDINGLY few of the innumerable thousands who visit Westminster Abbey every year are aware that the venerable roof of that building shelters a wholly unique collection of wax figures. No doubt the discovery that such is the case will be somewhat distressing to those who think of the structure as "a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe." Waxworks have so little in common with the associations that cluster around a building of so many exalted memories.

Yet that feeling of incongruity may be a modern growth. Partly, perhaps, it is due to Dickens, and partly to another cause. That the idea of wax effigies appeals to the risible faculties is no doubt owing somewhat to the creation of Mrs. Jarley, the loquacious owner of that exhibition which was "the delight of the nobility and gentry, and the peculiar pet of the royal family." But there is a still earlier cause,

Digitized by Google

from which Dickens is likely to have derived his inspiration. More than a century has gone by since Madame Tussaud, who had learned modelling in Paris and suffered imprisonment under the Revolution, settled in London and established her world-renowned collection of waxworks. For so many years, then, has the exhibition of wax figures been regarded from the standpoint of money-making and amusement, that the bare suggestion of the existence of similar effigies in Westminster Abbey may savour of sacrilege.

Such is the case nevertheless. And in the late seventeenth century the waxworks of the Abbey were held in higher repute than the most eloquent pulpit orator. A pertinent proof of that fact is recorded by Dr. Pope in his "Life of Seth Ward" in the following passage: "Another time Dr. Barrow preached at the Abbey on a holiday. Here I must inform the reader that it is a custom for the servants of the church upon all holidays, Sundays excepted, betwixt the sermon and evening prayers, to show the Tombs and Effigies of the Kings and Queens in Wax, to the meaner sort of people, who then flock thither from all the corners of the town, and pay their twopence to see 'The Play of the

Digitized by Google

Dead Volks,' as I have heard a Devonshire clown most improperly call it. These perceiving Dr. Barrow in the pulpit after the hour was past, and fearing to lose that time in hearing which they thought they could more profitably employ in receiving — these, I say, became impatient, and caused the organ to be struck up against him, and would not give over playing till they had blow'd him down."

How did these wax effigies gain entrance to the Abbey? Well, briefly, most of them are relics of funerals. But there are several which owe their existence to the enterprise with which, once the idea was conceived, the Abbey officials carried on the waxworks business.

First, then, a word or two of explanation. In the distant centuries, no funeral of royalty or of any noble person was deemed complete unless the procession included a "herse." Naturally, the reader will remark, for how else would the body be carried to the grave? But the "hearse" of the twentieth century and the "herse" of the seventeenth century have nothing in common. The former certainly is used to carry the coffin; the latter was not. In the seventeenth century, and earlier and later, the coffin was carried to burial on a car; the "herse" was

Digitized by Google

used for quite a different purpose. Instead of being a vehicle of the type now in use under that name, the " herse " was a wooden platform or small stage, draped with black hangings, in the centre of which there reposed a waxen image of the person who was being carried to his grave. This " herse " usually occupied a place in the procession immediately in front of the car bearing the coffin and body.

What may have been the origin of this curious custom is not definitely known. Perhaps it owed its origin to the Roman occupation of Britain, for among the Romans it was the special privilege of a nobleman, and of no other, to have a waxen image of his person carried at his funeral. If the Romans followed this custom in Britain, it was a long time ere the natives copied it, for the practice does not seem to date further back than the fourteenth century in England.

After the " herse " and its waxen figure had been escorted in the funeral procession, its mission was by no means completed. It was carried into the Abbey itself, and, when the coffin had been buried, was placed over or by the side of the grave. In those olden days, funeral wreaths were not in vogue, but little tributes of affection, which sometimes took the

Digitized by Google

form of poems, were pinned to the black hangings of the "herse," or attached with paste or wax. If no adverse fate overtook it, the wax effigy was usually allowed to remain for a month beside the grave of the person it depicted; but this period was greatly exceeded in the case of royalty. Sometimes, however, the figure was so roughly handled that it had to be removed in a few days. This was the case with the effigy of the Earl of Essex, the Parliamentary general. On the night after his funeral, some Cavaliers broke into the Abbey, and, after defacing the head of the image, helped themselves to most of the garments in which it had been dressed. As a consequence, the remains, which were literally "remains," had to be gathered up and removed the following day.

From the time of Queen Elizabeth, it became customary, after the "herse" had remained beside the grave for some months, to remove the waxen figure and preserve that for a still longer period. In that practice will probably be found the origin of the unique exhibition which remains in the Abbey to this day but is so little known to most visitors. As the years went by, the officials realized that they had quite an interesting collection of figures on their hands, and the

Digitized by Google

next step was to provide a suitable apartment in which to keep them, and for admission to which a fee could be exacted. Such an apartment was found in the oratory over Islip's Chapel, and in that chamber the effigies are still carefully preserved in glass-door cases.

Islip's Chapel is well worthy the attention of the visitor for its own sake. It is situated to the left of the usual entrance at Solomon's Porch, at the beginning of the north ambulatory. Abbot Islip, the "great builder," laid the foundation stone of this exquisite little chapel in 1502, and thirty years later he was laid to rest within its walls. That long-dead churchman becomes almost a living figure under the loving touch of Dean Stanley's pen. "In the elaborate representation which has been preserved of his obsequies, we seem to be following to their end the funeral of the Middle Ages. We see him standing amidst the 'slips' or branches of the bower of moral virtues, which, according to the fashion of the fifteenth century, indicated his name; with the words, significant of his character, 'Seek peace and pursue it.' We see him, as he last appeared in state at the coronation of Henry VIII., assisting Wareham in the act, so fraught with consequences for all the

Digitized by Google

future history of the English Church — amidst all the works of the Abbey, which he is carrying on with all the energy of his individual character and with the strange exorcisms of the age which was drawing to its close. We see him on his death-bed, in the old manor-house of Neate surrounded by the priests and saints of the ancient church; the Virgin standing at his feet, and imploring her Son's assistance to John Islip — 'Islip, O Fili vencius, succurre Johanni!' — the Abbot of Bury administering the last sacraments. We see his splendid hearse, amidst a forest of candles, filled with images, and surmounted by the crucifix with its attendant saints. We see him, as his effigy lay under the tomb in the little chapel which he built, like a king, for himself, recumbent in solitary state — the only Abbot who achieved that honour."

But another invisible presence also pervades this little chapel. When, nearly seventy years ago, the kindly generosity of America freely acceded to England's request for the remains of Major André, and the coffin of that heroic and ill-fated soldier was taken up from its resting-place by the banks of the Hudson and removed to England, it was deposited first in Islip's Chapel, still covered with the garlands and

Digitized by Google

flowers of transatlantic forgiveness. The chest, too, in which the remains were enclosed, is preserved in the Abbey to this day, and may be seen in a corner of the oratory upstairs keeping company with the effigies of royalty in wax.

Two centuries ago, a writer who described a "Walk Through London" gave the total of these wax images as half a score. "And so we went on," he wrote, "to see the ruins of majesty in the waxen figures placed there by authority. As soon as we had ascended half a score stone steps in a dirty cobweb hole, and in old worm-eaten presses, whose doors flew open at our approach, here stood Edward the Third, as they told us; which was a broken piece of wax-work, a battered head, and a straw-stuffed body, not one quarter covered with rags; his beautiful Queen stood by; not in better repair; and so to the number of half a score Kings and Queens, not near so good figures as the King of the Beggars make, and all the begging crew would be ashamed of the company. Their rear was brought up with good Queen Bess, with the remnants of an old dirty ruff, and nothing else to cover her."

Half a score is still the figure at which the

Digitized by Google

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

QUEEN MARY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

effigies stand, but in the interval several which were to be seen two hundred years since have been replaced by more recent creations. Some years subsequent to the visit described above the officials of the Abbey appear to have realized that an "old dirty ruff" was a rather scanty wardrobe for a Queen, and the action they took to remedy matters resulted in the modelling and fully robing of the figure now in the collection. The face is thought to have been copied from the effigy on the Queen's tomb, and is no doubt a faithful likeness of the virgin monarch as she appeared in her old age.

So far as actual likeness is concerned, there can be no doubt about the authenticity of that of Charles II. This is the oldest of all the figures, and the face was undoubtedly modelled at the time of the monarch's death. For two hundred years the effigy is said to have stood above the grave of the King and was his only monument. If the "merry monarch" was speedily forgotten by his own contemporaries, he has certainly had his full share of attention since, for it will be observed that while the glass-door of Queen Elizabeth's cupboard does not bear a single inscription, that which protects the effigy of Charles is scored with countless

Digitized by Google

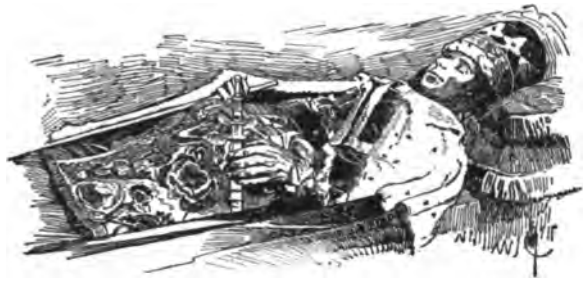
signatures. The figure is richly garbed in the blue and red velvet robes of the Order of the Garter, and, by reason of its faithful likeness to a King who is interesting alike in his weakness and strength, it must always prove the chief attraction in this unique collection.

One visitor to this little exhibition, and he a dweller in New York, seems to have fallen in love with the effigy of Queen Mary, the wife of William of Orange. And who can blame him? In her character she was undoubtedly one of the most amiable of English Queens, sweet in temper and of unbounded generosity; and in her person she was fully as majestic and handsome as she appears in her waxen counterpart. Her funeral is said to have been the "saddest and most august" ever seen in Westminster Abbey, and while Macaulay tells how the black plumes of the funeral car were relieved with flakes of snow, we learn from another source that a robin redbreast was constantly seen perched on her herse in the Abbey. The face of the Queen was modelled from a cast taken after her death. Close by, but in a much darker corner, is the richly-dressed effigy of Queen Anne, that obstinate but sorely-tried sovereign of whom the record stands that "sleep was

Digitized by Google

never more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her."

In the centre of this tiny chamber lies the recumbent figure of the last Duke of Buckingham, who, dying in Rome at the age of nineteen, was brought back to the Abbey for interment.



THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

This youth, who had for his mother Catherine, the natural daughter of James II., and for his father John Sheffield, who wrote the name of Buckingham in English literature, was epitaphed by Pope in these lines:

"If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd,
And ev'ry op'ning virtue blooming round,
Could save a parent's justest pride from fate,
Or add one patriot to a sinking state;
This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear,
Or sadly told, how many hopes lie here!

Digitized by Google

The living virtue now had shone approv'd,
The senate heard him, and his country lov'd.
Yet softer honours, and less noisy fame
Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham:
In whom a race, for courage fam'd and art,
Ends in the milder merit of the heart;
And chiefs or sages long to Britain giv'n,
Pays the last tribute of a saint to heav'n.

Buckingham's effigy was the last to be actually carried in a funeral procession, and the ceremonies of that occasion gave rise to a delightful exhibition of feminine sarcasm on the part of the young duke's mother. Anxious that the obsequies of her son should be conducted with the maximum of outward embellishment, she asked the Duchess of Marlborough for the use of the funeral car which had borne the remains of her famous husband to his grave. "It carried my Lord Marlborough," rejoined the haughty duchess, "and shall never be profaned by any other corpse." To which the equally high-spirited Catherine retorted, "I have consulted the undertaker, and he tells me that I may have a finer one for twenty pounds."

That Nelson has a place among these effigies is due to the unseemly wrangle which took place over his body. The officials of St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey were keenly

Digitized by Google

LORD NELSON.

CHARLES II.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

alive to the monetary importance of the great admiral's remains; they knew that wherever they were buried thither the crowds would congregate, and the greater the crowd the richer the harvest of admission fees. When St. Paul's won the day, and the hero was buried within its precincts, the expected happened. That is, Westminster Abbey, for all its waxen images and other attractions, was deserted by the crowd, and the minor canons realized that they must devise some novelty if they did not wish their salaries to dwindle to the vanishing point. At this crisis, order was given for the modelling of an effigy of Nelson, which was copied by the artist from a statue for which the admiral had given sittings. To add to the allurement of the figure, great pains were taken to secure for it such garments as had actually been worn by the hero of Trafalgar, with such success that all the clothes on the effigy, with the exception of the coat, had really clothed the living body of Nelson. The poorly-paid canons of the Abbey reaped the reward they desired, for the crowds, by their speedy return to Westminster, showed that a life-like image of their dead hero was much more to their taste than the sombre tomb which was all St. Paul's could show.

Digitized by Google

Time was when the fee for admission to this unique exhibition was collected in an old cap, said to have belonged to General Monk. That receptacle was thrust under the nose of Oliver Goldsmith, who, however, only asked, "Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?" But the guide was not to be baulked of his prey. "That, sir, I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble." Though the cap has disappeared, a charge of sixpence for admission is still enforced; but who can pretend that sixpence is an exorbitant sum for a realistic interview with good Queen Bess, the patron of Nell Gwynn, and the victor of Trafalgar, to say nothing of their companions?

Digitized by Google

VIII

BUNHILL FIELDS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BUNHILL FIELDS

BY common consent the two books which, next to the Bible, have been most widely read by English-speaking people are "The Pilgrim's Progress" and "Robinson Crusoe."

Of the first Coleridge declared that he knew no book he could so safely recommend "as teaching and enforcing the whole saving truth;" Swift found in one of its chapters better entertainment and information than in long discourses on the will and intellect; Southey eulogized it as "a clear stream of current English;" Lord Kames found its style akin to that of Homer with its "proper mixture of the dramatic and narrative;" and Macaulay concluded his judgment of its author with this oft-cited tribute: "We are not afraid to say that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great creative minds. One of these minds produced the 'Paradise Lost,' the other 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'"

Digitized by Google

Nor has "Robinson Crusoe" failed to win equal praise. Dr. Johnson placed it first among the three books he wished longer; Rousseau hailed it as the most complete "treatise on natural education;" Lamb declared it "delightful to all ranks and classes," equally at home in the kitchen and the libraries of the wealthiest and the most learned; Leslie Stephen credited its author with the gift of a tongue "to which no one could listen without believing every word that he uttered;" and Sir Walter Scott sums up the judgment of all by declaring that "there exists no book, either of instruction or entertainment, in the English language, which has been more generally read, and more universally admired."

Yet the authors of these books, — books which have coloured the religious and imaginative thought of so many millions, — John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe, have no memorial of any kind in Westminster Abbey. Of course their creed, alien as it was from that of the Church of England, rendered their burial in the Abbey impossible in the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries. Nor, at that date, had England realized the abiding fame of the two writers. But it is different now. In this

Digitized by Google

more charitable age the custodians of England's Valhalla do not enquire so closely into the religious faith of the nation's immortals, and that these two are secure of their place among those immortals no one doubts. Yet no memorial bust or votive tablet of either John Bunyan or Daniel Defoe has been set up in Westminster Abbey.

Elsewhere, then, and not in the " long-drawn aisle " or beneath the " fretted vault " of stately Abbey or Cathedral, must the resting-place of these deathless writers be sought.

Perhaps Bunyan and Defoe would have been well content that it should be so. Their nonconforming fellow-sleepers and stirring environment in Bunhill Fields are more in harmony with the lives they lived and the books they wrote than the austerity and aloofness of Westminster Abbey. Than those two places of sepulture it would be difficult to imagine burial-places of greater contrast. The atmosphere of the Abbey, for all the humanizing influence of Poets' Corner, is redolent of courtliness, and power, and high achievement in senate and battlefield, and the overmastering presence of royalty; and over all there broods that sense of repose and detachment from actual life

Digitized by Google

which belongs to an outworn conception of religion.

No such feelings oppress the visitor to Bunhill Fields. This ancient burial-ground, aptly described by Southey as "the *Campo Santo* of the Dissenters," is situated on the west side of City Road, one of the busiest of London's ever-crowded thoroughfares. From the dawning light of the longest summer day, and on through all its hours until dawn is about to break again, this highway is astir with human life. Close by are the headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company; directly opposite is John Wesley's Chapel; right and left are several of London's most notable hospitals; and mingling indiscriminately with these reminders of war, and faith, and charity are countless warehouses, factories and other hives of industry.

But as amidst the eddies of a whirlpool there are here and there placid surfaces in strange contrast to the seething waters around, so this historic God's acre offers the wayfarer a peaceful oasis in the restless tide of London life. In its quiet aloofness from human activity it perpetuates the rural repose which rested over Finsbury as a whole when the first grave was dug in Bunhill Fields. Two years after this

Digitized by Google

plot of land had been definitely enclosed as a place of burial, Pepys found this neighbourhood distinguished for its "very pleasant" fields, and so it remained until well on into the eighteenth century. Every yard of those "very pleasant" fields has long since been given its burden of house, or church, or factory, or hospital, but the few acres of Bunhill Fields, because they were set apart for death's harvest, hold the devouring tide of bricks and mortar steadfastly at bay.

Some two and a half centuries have passed since Bunhill Fields was devoted to the burial of the dead. One account antedates that event by more than another century, for it is affirmed that in 1549 more than a thousand cartloads of human remains were removed from the charnel of St. Paul's Cathedral and buried here. Perhaps that may account for the name of the cemetery, which is given as "Bonhill Field," that is "Bone-hill," in 1567. Whatever truth there may be in that philological guess, it is indubitable that ninety-eight years later, that is, in 1665, this portion of the manor of Finsbury was set apart by the authorities of the city of London, and enclosed by a brick wall, to provide a burial-place for the victims of the Great

Digitized by Google

Plague. Happily, however, that dread scourge appears to have spent its force before the final arrangements for interments here had been made, and later the land was purchased by a Mr. Tindal who "converted it into a burial-ground for the use of Dissenters." It consequently became known as "Tindal's Burial-ground," a name which, although in use as late as 1756, has been entirely superseded by the older designation of Bunhill Fields.

For nearly two centuries, that is, from 1665 to 1852, this plot of ground was industriously tilled by the spade of the grave-digger. A record of the interments shows that one hundred and twenty-three thousand mortals have been buried here, the great majority of whom were debarred by their non-conformist faith from sepulture in consecrated ground. "Nor," as it has been appositely remarked, "is theirs all ignoble dust. Some were buried here whose names have always been fondly cherished by the nation, and whose writings are amongst the most popular in the English language. Notable men of all professions and of all religious communities, divines, authors, and artists, with a crowd of worthies and confessors, whose learning and piety not only adorned the age in which they

Digitized by Google

lived, but have proved a blessing to the land, are interred in this ground. Many thousands of persons not in England alone but in America and the British Colonies have honoured ancestors lying here."

Four acres of land have a limit in their capacity for receiving human bodies, and that limit was reached at Bunhill Fields thirteen years before it attained the second century of its existence as a burial-ground. In 1852, then, the Secretary of State issued an order prohibiting further interments, and the Nonconformists of England, to whom this plot of ground had become endeared as the Westminster Abbey of their illustrious dead, had to seek a place of sepulture elsewhere.

Then followed a period of comparative neglect for Bunhill Fields. For fifteen years the burial-ground, no longer brought freshly to mind by constant use, was abandoned. The rains levelled the mounds of earth, frost and wind worked their will on the monuments, and tangled grass and weeds completed the work of desolation. At this juncture the cemetery was threatened with complete extinction, for a rapacious ecclesiastical corporation, cloaking its desire for gold under legal technicalities, made an effort to

Digitized by Google

secure possession of the ground with an eye to its exploitation for building purposes. Awakened in that way to the danger which imperilled a spot so sacred in their annals, the Nonconformists of England bestirred themselves, with the result that an act of Parliament was passed securing the inviolability of Bunhill Fields for ever.

One result of that tardy recognition of the historic interest of this burial-ground may be seen in the orderly appearance it presents to-day. Extensive alterations and reparations were carried out as soon as the decision of Parliament was taken, but in the course of that work not a fragment of stone was taken away, nor any portion of the soil removed. Tombs have been raised from beneath the ground, stones have been set straight, illegible inscriptions have been deciphered and re-cut, hundreds of decayed tombs have been restored, paths have been laid and avenues planted; but in doing all this the sacred rights of sepulture have been scrupulously respected. Naturally, many of the original monuments are no longer in existence, but in the work of restoration it was found possible to ensure the preservation of some five thousand tombstones.

Digitized by Google

Although the elements have obliterated so many thousands of the inscriptions graven on the memorials of Bunhill Fields, copies of the most important still exist. The accident of a venerable lady keeping a diary has preserved the memory of the man to whom we are indebted for those copies. The aged lady in question, who lived close by, "walked for the air" nowhere so frequently as in the "Dissenters' Burial Ground." Two children were her most constant companions, of whom the diarist records that they were at great pains to plant flowers over some neglected graves, and to copy down "most of the singular lines inscribed on the tombs." But a more industrious "Old Mortality" than those eager children was quietly at work in the same place. The diarist tells how one afternoon, after a visit to a nearby chapel, she and her pastor, Mr. Winter, and a clerical friend of the latter, Mat. Wilks, paid a visit to Bunhill Fields to see Dr. Owens' grave. "There," the diary says, "we found a worthy man known to Mr. Wilks, Mr. Rippon by name, who was laid down upon his side between two graves, and writing out the epitaphs word for word. He had an ink-horn in his button-hole, and a pen and book. He tells us that he has taken most of the old

Digitized by Google

inscriptions, and that he will, if God be pleased to spare his days, do all, notwithstanding it is a grievous labour, and the writing is hard to make out by reason of the oldness of the cutting in some, and defacings of other stones. It is a labour of love to him, and when he is gathered to his fathers, I hope some one will go on with his work."

DANIEL DEFOE'S GRAVE

That pious wish was fulfilled. When Dr. Rippon laid aside his inkhorn and pen, the work upon which he had expended so much willing labour was taken up by other hands, and in the College of Heralds and the office of the Architect of the City of London are preserved complete records of all inscriptions existing in 1868.

Such matters, however, are mainly of appeal to the patient genealogist, the unwearied explorer

Digitized by Google

of the intricacies of family history; for the majority who seek out Bunhill Fields the main interest lies in the fact that here it is possible to stand close beside the dust of Bunyan, Defoe, Isaac Watts, William Blake, and other sons of fame.

Accident was responsible for Bunyan's burial in London. His own choice without doubt would have fallen on Bedford or the adjacent hamlet of Elstow. In the latter he was born and had spent his careless boyhood and early manhood; the former had been the scene of his weary imprisonment, the sphere of his labours as an author and preacher. When he became famous, alike for his prowess with his pen and his gifts as a speaker, he had many offers of preferment to larger and more lucrative positions, but nothing could induce him to leave Bedford, where he was supremely happy in his family and all other relationships. And there, unquestionably, he would have been laid to rest save for accident.

Death was appointed to overtake him away from home. Starting out from Bedford to London, where his presence was needed in connection with a new book, he made a wide detour to Reading on a mission of reconciliation. A

Digitized by Google

father he knew had quarrelled with his son, and threatened to disinherit him. Bunyan, however, was able to reunite the two, and, the mission accomplished, he then resumed his journey to the metropolis. But the delay caused him to be caught in a furious summer storm, through which he rode for forty miles. The evil effects of his drenching did not manifest themselves for a few days. In fact, he was able to preach on the Sunday after his arrival, but on the Tuesday following he was seized with a violent fever, and ten days later he breathed his last, his final utterance being, "Take me, for I come to Thee." And then his friends recalled that in his last sermon he had said: "Dost thou see a soul that has the image of God in him? Love him, love him: say, *This* man and I must go to heaven one day; serve one another, do good for one another; and if any wrong you, pray to God to right you, and love the brotherhood."

That exhortation to broad charity was characteristic of the man. The author of "The Pilgrim's Progress" was an utter stranger to that narrowness which is sometimes thought to be inseparable from the faith he professed. "He was extremely tolerant in his terms of Church membership," says Froude. "He of-

Digitized by Google

fended the stricter part of his congregation by refusing ever to make infant baptism a condition of exclusion. The only persons with whom he declined to communicate were those whose lives were openly immoral." He was no self-seeker. When a London merchant offered to take his son into his house, Bunyan replied, " God did not send me to advance my family, but to preach the Gospel."

None need be surprised, then, that a man so transparently sincere, so human, so loving, so self-denying was heard gladly on the rare occasions when he preached in London; nor that many pleaded that they might in death be laid near his grave. It was no unusual event for more than a thousand people to assemble by seven o'clock on a dark winter's morning to hear him preach; ample indeed must the recompense have been to gaze upon his open ruddy face and sparkling eyes. Many of the better-off dissenters of London must have contended for the honour of acting host to the lovable Bedford preacher. On his last visit that privilege fell to the lot of one John Strudwick, a grocer in whose house ready hospitality had been given him often before. Mr. Strudwick possessed a vault in Bunhill Fields, where he had the

Digitized by Google

mournful satisfaction of laying the dust of the immortal dreamer. The monument, which was restored by public subscription in 1862, sustains a recumbent figure of the Bedford preacher and bears the simple inscription: "John Bunyan, Author of 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' ob. 31st August, 1688, aet. 60."

Forty-three years were to elapse ere the author of "Robinson Crusoe" came to join the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress" in the silent companionship of Bunhill Fields. Unlike in their lives and characters, Bunyan and Defoe had nothing in common in death. Pitiful, indeed, is the contrast between the final earthly hours of these two. Such fame and prosperity as Defoe won by "Robinson Crusoe" came to him late in life, for he was nearly sixty when he penned that classic; but for all that the closing year or two of his existence held nothing of the comfort of wealth or the happiness of renown.

Over the multifarious activities of Defoe a sudden eclipse descended in September, 1729. He had a new book partly in type when he ceased his labours abruptly and fled to some mysterious hiding-place. Why is unknown. Among the many reasons advanced the most credible is that which does Defoe the least

Digitized by Google

THE CROMWELL VAULT.

JOHN BUNYAN'S TOMB.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

honour. Any way, it is a sad picture we have of an old man, weary with much labour, cut off from his familiar haunts and his family, a homeless, desolate, penurious wanderer. He died on April 26th, 1731, in Ropemaker's Alley, Moorfields, and it was no doubt the proximity of his deathplace to Bunhill Fields which led to his burial there. The recorder of the interment made the bare and ignorant entry, "1731, April 26. Mr. Dubow, Cripplegate;" and the creator of Robinson Crusoe had to wait a hundred and forty years before his resting-place was marked by any monument. How that long over-due tribute was paid to Defoe, the following inscription explains: "This monument is the result of an appeal in 'The Christian World' newspaper to the boys and girls of England for funds to place a suitable memorial upon the grave of Daniel Defoe. It represents the united contributions of seventeen hundred persons. Sept. 1870."

Among the other notable sleepers in this God's Acre are Dr. Thomas Goodwin, who watched by the death-bed of Oliver Cromwell; General Charles Fleetwood, a prominent leader in the Civil War and the son-in-law of the Protector; Susannah Wesley, the mother of

Digitized by Google

John and Charles Wesley; Joseph Ritson, the laborious antiquary; Isaac Watts, the famous hymnologist; Nathaniel Mather, "the honour of both Englands;" and William Blake, the mystic painter-poet whose genius has given employment to many pens during the past few years.

THE GRAVE OF ISAAC WATTS

Although it was in a humble room that Blake died,—the one modest apartment in which he spent his days and nights with his beloved wife, painting, drawing, studying, cooking and sleeping within its walls, — his death-bed was radiant with happiness. Almost the last stroke of his pencil was employed in a hasty sketch of his wife, "ever an angel" to him, and his expiring breath was spent in songs, words and melody being the offspring of the moment. "My beloved," he said to his wife of these songs, "they are not mine — no — they are not mine." He died on August 12th, 1827, and at his own request he was buried in Bunhill Fields, where

Digitized by Google

his parents and others of his relatives had been laid. No monument at present marks the resting-place of Blake. He was placed in a "common grave," which was doubtless used for other interments. Its position, however, is definitely known, and it may be that ere many years have passed some simple memorial will be raised over the dust of one to whom "the veil of outer things seemed always to tremble with some breath behind it."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

IX

FRED WALKER'S COOKHAM

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FRED WALKER'S COOKHAM

GRANTING to a given poet and a given painter the possession of equal genius, the latter will always have to wait longer than the former for widespread recognition of his merits. The reason seems capable of a simple explanation. By paper and print the poet can multiply his verses indefinitely, and the millionth printed copy is as efficacious in advertising his genius as the first. But the case of the painter is not so fortunate. His fame in the last resort must rest upon the actual sight of his pictures, and that experience can be enjoyed by comparatively few. In his lifetime most of his paintings are acquired by private owners, and thus withdrawn from public gaze; their brief exhibition in art galleries only provides opportunity for the minority to make their acquaintance.

Happily, however, that minority includes the critics of art, to whom falls the responsibility of advising the world when a new genius makes

Digitized by Google

his appearance. But their influence is slow in reaching the great public, even though it may be reinforced by reproductions of a selected picture here and there. Still, the eulogy of the critic is responsible in the end for the artist's ultimate fame. Pictures which are praised by many pens awaken the desire of wealthy connoisseurs, and when that stage is reached the popular verdict is won.

Perhaps it hardly accords with the dignity of art that its general recognition should owe so much to the cheque-book of its rich patron; but the fact remains and must be accepted with the best grace possible. Max Nordau cynically notes that on the day when six hundred thousand francs were paid for Millet's "Angelus" the "snobs of both worlds took off their hats and murmured in a voice hushed with reverence: 'This must be a great painter.' As we see, the world's fame is but a question of money. Many more men are able to reckon than are able to feel the beauty of art, and, to the vast majority, its price is the infallible, the one key to the understanding of a work."

During the present year the cheque-book stamp of merit has been placed on the art of Frederick Walker. At an important picture sale,

Digitized by Google

where canvases by Millais, and Mason, and David Cox and Turner were offered for the eager competition of wealthy collectors, Walker's water colour replica of "The Harbour of Refuge"

FRED WALKER'S HOME AT COOKHAM

aroused spirited bidding and finally realized two thousand five hundred and eighty guineas, the highest price of the day.

One inevitable result will follow in the wake of this monetary triumph: Cookham, that lovely Thames-side village which inspired so

Digitized by Google

much of Walker's best work, will in the future prove as attractive for its artistic associations as it has been in the past for its aquatic pleasures. Nay, more. It is not improbable that the humble cottage in which Walker lived, and the modest headstone which marks his grave, will acquire a greater interest for future visitors than the "stately houses of titled and wealthy Englishmen" which had so overpowering an effect on a pilgrim of a year or two ago. This obsessed note-taker does not appear to have heard of the name of Frederick Walker; but he waxes eloquent about my Lord This who owns such and such a seat, his Grace That whose mansion stands just here, and about a notorious expatriated American who possesses the most gorgeous estate of them all. Well, who shall grudge them their brief fame? Lord will follow lord, and duke succeed duke, and millionaire shall come after millionaire, but for the ages unborn the greatest glory of Cookham will be that its quaint street and verdant meadows and bosky trees and peaceful river are transferred for ever to the poetic landscapes of Frederick Walker.

In the apportionment of years only three and a half decades were allotted to the artist, and of

Digitized by Google

these some twenty-five had fled before he learnt to know and love this picturesque corner of Berkshire. But those twenty-five years had prepared him to reap the rich harvest awaiting his brush here.

Frederick Walker was born in London in 1840, of parents who on his father's side could claim artistic ancestry, and on his mother's a descent from forebears who had an intuitive love of the beautiful. After brief and haphazard schooling he, while in his teens, began to frequent the Elgin Marble room of the British Museum, and, by assiduous drawing from the antique, acquired that sense of classic form which was to prove so invaluable in after years. Apprenticeship to wood engraving followed, and when he had not completed his twentieth year he had entered upon his artistic career by making wood-cuts for the press. This soon led to an introduction to Thackeray, who at the time was on the look-out for an artist to illustrate "The Adventures of Philip." The meeting between the two is described by George Smith, who drove the young man to the novelist's house. "When we went up to Mr. Thackeray, he saw how nervous and distressed the young artist was. After a little time he said, 'Can

Digitized by Google

you draw? Mr. Smith says you can.' 'Y-e-e-s, I think so,' said the young man who was, within a few years, to excite the admiration of the whole world by the excellence of his drawings. 'I'm going to shave,' said Mr. Thackeray, 'would you mind drawing my back?' Mr. Thackeray went to his toilet table and commenced the operation, while Mr. Walker took a sheet of paper and began his drawing; I looking out of the window in order that he might not feel that he was being watched. I think Mr. Thackeray's idea of turning his back towards him was as ingenious as it was kind; for I believe that if Mr. Walker had been asked to draw his face instead of his back, he would hardly have been able to hold his pencil." This was in 1860, and the acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into friendship, which knew no break until the great-hearted novelist passed suddenly away three years later. Thackeray's daughter tells how Walker came running to the house when he heard of her father's death, and of how he was met "wandering about the stairs in tears."

To follow the further stages in his career as he finally left periodical illustrating behind and came before the world as an artist in his own right

Digitized by Google

COOKHAM ON THE THAMES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

COOKHAM LOCK.

COOKHAM ON THE THAMES.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

is not necessary. Suffice it to say that by 1865, when he had reached his twenty-fifth year, he had already won enviable repute for his artistic skill. At this crisis some happy chance led to his taking a cottage at Cookham, as a summer home for himself and his devoted mother and sister and brother. That modest dwelling stands in the main street of the village, about midway between the railway station and the Thames. Perhaps it is hardly the kind of dwelling an artist would have been expected to choose, for its flint-built walls and ungainly height are far from picturesque. Hither, however, for the remaining ten years of his life, Walker frequently came, thus building up for this homely cottage a wealth of association which many a more stately home must envy.

But if his cottage home at Cookham was not beautiful, the village itself, and other near-by hamlets, and the surrounding fields, and the "silver-streaming" Thames were replete with incipient pictures. The painter's mother realized that fact. "This is a very lovely place," she wrote soon after reaching the village. "Fred would be delighted; and for a summer picture of boys bathing, there cannot be its equal, at least in my experience." Such was to be the

Digitized by Google

experience of her son too. Whether he was indebted to his mother for the suggestion is not on record, but there is plentiful evidence to show that it was at Cookham the idea for "The Bathers" first took possession of Walker's mind, and that it was by the banks of the Thames he worked at and finally achieved that masterly canvas. As he entered on his task he told his sister that "beginning a picture is like taking a wife; one must cleave to it, leaving one's relations and everything, to work when one can." It proved a more formidable undertaking than he had imagined, but he devoted to its completion every day that could be spared from other work, and his letters are full of proofs of the exacting labour entailed by the production of a great picture. He searched far and wide for just that nature setting which would satisfy his ideal, and at last he was rewarded. One day, he writes, he "came to a place having for a background that which will *top everything* for the picture, instead of Cliveden, though I shall keep the nearer trees, also the meadows and rushes, just the same. I got so excited that I saw the whole thing done from beginning to end. . . . When I saw the loveliness to-day, the whole picture came before me in such a way,

Digitized by Google

COOKHAM CHURCH.

CLIVEDEN WOODS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

that I decided upon commencing on the big canvas at once."

Apart from "The Bathers" and other paintings which need not be recalled, it must be pointed out that two other notable pictures owe their inspiration to this village and its neighbourhood. One of these was "The Street, Cookham," which has been truthfully characterized as "one of the best of those more spontaneous designs in which the artist treated a simple subject with no other aspiration than to express by legitimate means all its natural beauty. With a well-suggested continuity of onward movement a young girl drives before her, through the broken-down red-roofed houses of the winding village street, a flock of cackling geese." The time-worn cottages which form the background of this picture were in full view from the windows of Walker's own abode, and, as he was not able to finish the picture at Cookham, three of the village geese were sent specially to his London studio for final observation there.

Far more important in the record of Walker's fame was the other painting, "The Harbour of Refuge," which owes so much to the near-by village of Bray. With the public at large this is the most popular of his pictures, and no

Digitized by Google

pilgrim to Cookham should fail to extend his wanderings to Bray, where may be seen that restful almshouse quadrangle which the painter selected as the setting of his theme. Many pens have essayed a description of this famous canvas, but none with so much sympathy as that of Richard Muther. "The background," he writes, "is formed by one of those peaceful buildings where the aged poor pass the remainder of their days in meditative rest. The sun is sinking, and there is a rising moon. The red-tiled roof stands out clear against the quiet evening sky, while upon the terrace in front, over which the tremulous yellow rays of the setting sun are shed, an old woman with a bowed figure is walking, guided by a graceful girl who steps lightly forward. It is the old contrast between day and night, youth and age, strength and decay. Yet in Walker there is no opposition at all. For as light mingles with the shadows in the twilight, this young and vigorous woman who paces in the evening, holding the arm of the aged in mysterious silence, has at the moment no sense of her youth, but is rather filled with that melancholy thought underlying Goethe's '*Warte nur bolde*,' 'Wait awhile and thou shalt rest too.' Her eyes have a strange gaze, as

Digitized by Google

though she were looking into vacancy in mere absence of mind. And upon the other side of the picture this theme of the transient life of humanity is still further developed. Upon a bench in the midst of a verdant lawn covered with daisies a group of old men are sitting meditatively near a hedge of hawthorn luxuriant in blossom. Above the bench there stands an old statue casting a clearly defined shadow upon the gravel path, as if to point to the contrast between imperishable stone and the unstable race of men, fading away like the autumn leaves. Well in the foreground a labourer is mowing down the tender spring grass with a scythe — a strange, wild, and rugged figure, a reaper whose name is Death."

This note of "fragrant lyricism" is the most dominant characteristic of Walker's work. To him it was given to uplift the simplicities of rural life, whether in labour or repose, into the realm of pensive imagination. But, as J. Comyns Carr has insisted, Walker was never tempted "to disturb the sweetness of outward nature in order to bring it into sympathy with the sadness often imagined in his figures. He allowed the contrast to take its due effect; and, however serious or pathetic the influence of his design,

Digitized by Google

he never forgot the delicate beauty of the flowers, or the intricate delicacy in tree-form and foliage." Much of this gift he owed to his communing with nature amid the fields of the Cookham country side. He paid many visits to the Highlands of Scotland, and spent one winter in Algiers; but the former were excursions in quest of fish, and the latter journey was undertaken in search of health; the grandeurs of the Highlands and the light and colour of Algiers held no appeal to his art. Indeed, on one of his visits to Scotland he wrote: "I often think of the peaceful meadows and gigantic shady trees about Cookham (even though I have been away so short a time) and compare the scene with this. No language of mine can draw the difference."

Although more than a generation has passed since the artist was laid in his too-early grave in Cookham churchyard, there are still a few natives of the village who can speak of him from personal recollection. They all agree in describing him as a shy, nervous man, and are at one in their testimony as to his dislike to being overlooked when at work on a canvas. It was always the same. An old farmer of another village said: "What a way he was in if any one passed and

Digitized by Google

tried to look! Why, he made nothing of taking up his picture and running into the house with it. You know he got my missus to stand a bit, but she nor I nor none of us never got a chance of a look at what he was a drawing."

No artist worked more assiduously in actual

FRED WALKER'S GRAVE

contact with nature than Walker, a fact which does much to explain the harmony which persists between his figures and the landscapes in which they are placed. It is more true of him than of Millet that his "landscapes are animated by men; but not by men who are accessories,

Digitized by Google

as is the case with Corot, but by men who are a part of the landscape, its most important and essential part precisely as the trees and clouds are, but more dignified and spiritual than trees or clouds." The testimony of one of his friends, to the effect that he would work under circumstances of physical discomfort such as would have made painting impossible to most men, is confirmed by many stories still told of him at Cookham.

Perhaps this devotion to his art hastened his end. Consumption was inherent in his family. Seven years before his own death a younger brother had fallen a victim to that ruthless disease and had been buried at Cookham; and hardly had he been dead a year when his greatly loved sister Fanny succumbed to the scourge and was laid to rest " by those she loved."

Early in May, 1875, Walker and an artist friend departed for the Scottish Highlands for a short fishing trip. They made their headquarters at St. Fillans by the side of Loch Earn, and there the sudden call came for Walker. Hemorrhage of the lungs set in almost without warning, and a few days later, on June 4th, the gifted artist, whom Millais described as " the greatest painter

Digitized by Google

of the century," breathed his last. The final scene of all shall be told in the language of his brother-in-law, Henry George Marks, whose Life of the artist is a singularly affectionate and

THE WALKER MEDALLION IN COOKHAM CHURCH

affecting tribute. "The funeral took place at Cookham on Tuesday, June 8, the remains having been taken down over night. A bright fresh morning, contrasting with the sadness of our errand, ushered in a day such as Walker loved. The coffin was taken to the little sitting-room in the cottage of one of his old Cookham

Digitized by Google

friends; and there, later in the day, came those whom love of him and of his work had brought from town. But for the short notice more would have been present at his funeral, though no numbers could have added to the impressiveness of the scene — impressive from its absolute simplicity. As we stood around the open grave and saw the sheep browsing among the grassy mounds, glimpses here and there of the river he delighted in, the wealth of early summer lit up by a glorious sun; in addition to their affection for the man, none but must have felt the pity of it that the painter whose figures had found fit setting in such surroundings, whose insight had revealed to us new meaning in rural scenes and rustic labour, whose unsullied art had been a brightness in our lives, should have been taken ere he had reached the fulness of his prime. After more than twenty years have passed, one who was present writes: 'The way in which all gave way to uncontrollable emotion, which found its vent in tears, was an incident never to forget.' "

In addition to the simple head-stone which marks his grave — the grave he shares with his brother and devoted mother — the memory of Walker is perpetuated in Cookham church by

Digitized by Google

an exquisite medallion portrait executed as a labour of love by H. H. Armstead. These have their uses for such as need them, but the informed visitor to this lovely district will find himself murmuring the old words: *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

X

BY FAMOUS GRAVES

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BY FAMOUS GRAVES

IN life, the great are the companions of a few; in death they become the possession of the many. Is not this the secret of that charm which attracts so many thousands to the resting-places of illustrious men? There is a satisfaction in standing close by the side of those who have ministered to our imaginative life, even though it be but their dust to which we draw near.

This after-death homage is one of the compensations of genius. How many there have been who have enriched the world with fair thoughts and melodious songs out of a life spent in poverty, neglect, and sorrow. It was not given them in life to enter into the heritage of a people's love; is it idle to think that in death they are conscious of the affection which we feel to-day as we stand beside their graves? Some of the great dead had their meed of responsive love in life, and it is pleasant to think that their passing into the silent land may not

Digitized by Google

have broken the continuity of their reward. Washington Irving observed that visitors to Westminster Abbey remained longest amid the memorials in Poets' Corner. "They linger about these as about the tombs of friends and companions; for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse between the author and his fellow men is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than for himself; he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might the more intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown; for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dispensation of pleasure. Well may posterity be grateful to his memory; for he has left it an inheritance, not of empty names and sounding actions, but whole treasures of wisdom, bright gems of thought, and golden veins of language."

As there are few countries which have so many famous graves as England, so are there none of

Digitized by Google

the earth's great dead who have more pilgrims to their shrines than those who have clothed their thoughts in the English tongue. There are solitary great graves in the world, such as Dante's, which are cosmopolitan in their interest; but in English soil is buried a vast army of immortals who are the common possession and glory of two great peoples. And there are no more faithful pilgrims to the famous graves of England than those who journey from the Republic of the West; their devotion to the memory of the illustrious dead often puts to shame the forgetfulness or apathy of those native to the land in which they rest.

Although the grave of Laurence Sterne is within a stone's throw of one of the most crowded thoroughfares of London, there are few save Americans who turn aside from the stream of life in Bayswater Road to gaze upon his resting-place in the St. George's burial-ground. He had boasted in "Tristram Shandy" that his preference would be to die in an inn, untroubled by the presence and services of his friends; yet when, in his London lodgings, he began to realize that death might be near, he pined for his daughter Lydia to nurse him. Only a hired nurse and a footman stood by Sterne's death-

Digitized by Google

bed. The latter had been sent to inquire after the health of the famous author, and, being told by the landlady of the house to go upstairs and see for himself, he reached the death-chamber just as Sterne was passing away. Putting up his hand as though to ward off a blow, he ejaculated, "Now it is come," and so died. The story goes that even as he was dying, the nurse was busy possessing herself of the gold sleeve-links from his wrists.

Despite the fame he had won, only two mourners followed Sterne to his grave. But other eyes, it seems, watched the burial; for it is affirmed that two days later the body was taken from the grave and sold to a professor of anatomy for dissection. Only an accident revealed the identity of the "subject." Happening to have some friends visiting him at the time, the professor invited them to witness a demonstration, and on their following him to his surgery one of them was horrified to recognize in the partially dissected corpse the features of his friend Laurence Sterne. Such is the story, and most authorities agree in thinking it likely to be true. Perhaps it was not unknown to the two masons who erected the first stone over the grave, for their inscription began with the significant words,

Digitized by Google

THE GRAVE OF LAURENCE STERNE.

WHERE THACKERAY SLEEPS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Near to this place lies the body," etc. How near, or how far away, the actual remains of Sterne at length found a resting-place will probably never be known.

More sudden than the call which summoned Sterne into the unseen, was that to which William Makepeace Thackeray answered. Only a few days before the end, he met his great rival Dickens on the steps of one of the London clubs. They passed in silence, for an estrangement had existed between the two for several years. But Thackeray could not endure that this should last any longer. Turning back, he went up to Dickens with outstretched hand, saying he could not bear to be on any save the old terms of friendship. Dickens hastened to grasp the offered hand, and the two had a few minutes' pleasant talk ere they parted — parted for ever.

Two days before Christmas, Thackeray retired to rest earlier than usual, and in the watches of the night, alone, death called. "And lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master." He was buried six days later in Kensal Green Cemetery, in the presence of a vast concourse of mourners. Near the grave stood Lewes, and Trollope, and Browning, and

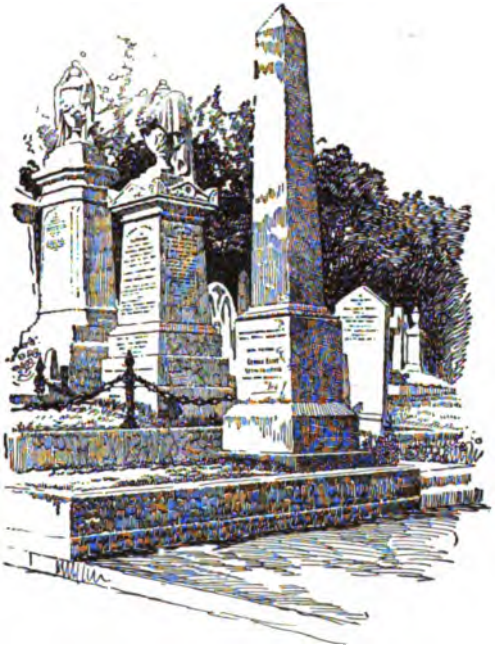
Digitized by Google

Dickens, and many another famous in the annals of Victorian literature. When a year had passed, the aged mother of the novelist was laid beside her son in the same grave; and thirty years later it was opened again to receive the body of that wife from whom, because of her sad mental condition, Thackeray had been parted during the last twenty-three years of his life.

Something of the gloom which overshadowed the life of Coleridge seems to abide with him in his resting-place, which is situated underneath the chapel of the Highgate grammar school. It was in that favoured suburb of London, in the home of the Gillmans, that, it will be remembered, the poet spent the last eighteen years of his life, and when he died in 1834 his grave was made in the burial-ground of the parish. Thirty years later, however, when the grammar-school was rebuilt, a part of that building was erected over the burial-ground, and from that time to this the vault in which Coleridge lies has been overshadowed in perpetual gloom. Nor is that all. The space around the vault has been utilized as a workshop and a receptacle for all kinds of rubbish, and altogether the surroundings of this famous grave are little less than a disgrace.

Digitized by Google

Coleridge, more than most sons of genius, seems to need that his resting-place shall not suggest sombre thoughts. Enough such are



GEORGE ELIOT'S GRAVE

recalled by his life-story, in which lack of will wrought such havoc with matchless mental gifts. "I am dying," he wrote a little before the end came. "Is it not strange that, very recently, bygone images and scenes of early

Digitized by Google

life have stolen into my mind like breezes blown from the spice-islands of Youth and Hope." Such images, to banish the gaunt spectres of memory, ought his grave to suggest, but never can so long as its sordid surroundings are allowed to remain in their present condition. How would Lamb have grieved over this gloomy grave, Lamb who in the short time he survived his friend was often murmuring, " His great and dear spirit haunts me — never saw I his likeness, nor probably the world can see again."

At the foot of the hill on the summit of which Coleridge lies in his melancholy tomb, is the beautiful Highgate Cemetery, where, underneath a plinth of red granite, George Eliot was laid to rest close beside the grave of Lewes. Although she had been in delicate health for many years, and had felt the loss of Lewes very keenly, her marriage with Mr. Cross seemed for a time to renew her hold upon life. Unfortunately she caught a chill in a draughty concert-hall in London on a December afternoon, and in a few days the illness reached a fatal termination. In her writing-case an unfinished letter was found, and its expression of tender sympathy for a friend upon whom a great sorrow had fallen was a fitting finis to the labour of that pen

Digitized by Google

which had given delight and comfort to so many thousands. While the doctors were around her bed, she whispered to her husband, "Tell them I have great pain in my left side," and then became unconscious and spoke no more.

Defiant of the sleet and rain of a wild December day, a great crowd attended the funeral, conspicuous among the mourners being the tall form of that brother from whom she had drawn the portrait of Tom Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss." One who was present in the chapel has told how impressive the ceremony was, especially at the moment when the preacher quoted the words of her own hymn, and reminded his hearers how the great dead had joined

> "the choir invisible
> Whose music is the gladness of the world."

Few graves in Highgate or any other cemetery hold so much of genius as that in which several members of the gifted Rossetti family are buried. The notable parents of those richly-endowed children rest here; and here also the body of Christina Rossetti was laid in the earth. The next grave contains the wife of Ford Maddox Brown, and an infant grandchild for whom a

Digitized by Google

line from Christina's most unforgetable poem, "Remember or Forget," serves as epitaph.

In the Rossetti vault the wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the most famous of all that band, found her too early grave. No passage in the life of the painter-poet was so compact of romance and tragedy as the brief days of his wedded union with Elizabeth Siddal. She was an assistant in a London milliner's shop when first seen by a friend of Rossetti, who had accompanied his mother to the shop. Struck by her unusual beauty, he, through his mother, asked whether the young lady would consent to give him sittings, and it was when she was in his studio that Rossetti saw and fell in love with Miss Siddal. All lovers of his pictures are familiar with her appearance, for his Beatrice was thenceforward consistently painted from her. After ten years' courtship, they were married, but less than two years later she died, the immediate cause of death being an overdose of laudanum. In the distraction of his grief, Rossetti placed in his wife's coffin the manuscript of a large quantity of his poems: "I have often," he said, "been writing at those poems when Lizzie was ill and suffering, and I might have been attending to her, and now they

Digitized by Google

HOGARTH'S GRAVE.

THE ROSSETTI GRAVE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

shall go." As he had no copies of these poems, his friends constantly urged him to consent to the manuscript being exhumed, and more than seven years later he reluctantly agreed. Two or three intimate friends undertook the gruesome task, which was carried out in the night by the light of a fire made beside the grave. When the coffin was raised and opened, the body was seen to be in a perfect state of preservation. The manuscript too, had suffered little by its long burial.

Perhaps some day this strange midnight scene will be perpetuated by the hand of an artist, for the history of literature contains no more striking incident than that associated with the Rossetti grave.

Among the tombs in Chiswick churchyard, close beside the Thames, the most notable and best-preserved is that which contains the remains of William Hogarth. In his home near by, the famous artist busied himself during his last days with designing a tail-piece for his works, that "Finis" which is not the least known of his pictures. Shortly after, towards the end of October, 1764, he was removed to his other house in Leicester Fields, weak in body but cheerful in mind. Here he found waiting for him a letter from his friend Benjamin Franklin, and

Digitized by Google

his last occupation was to prepare a rough answer to that epistle. But the reply in its completed form never reached Philadelphia, for when the painter retired to bed he was seized with a distressing vomiting. Alarmed at his condition, he rang his bell with such violence as to tear the wire from the wall. In a few moments the summons was answered by Hogarth's cousin, Mary Lewis, and, in her arms, two hours later, he passed away. The monument over his grave was not erected until seven years later, but since then it has been the object of unceasing care. It bears an inscription by Garrick, who probably penned more epitaphs than any other versifier of his time.

Digitized by Google

XI

CONCERNING DICK TURPIN

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONCERNING DICK TURPIN

HAD it not been for the idealizing pen of Harrison Ainsworth it is likely the name of Dick Turpin would have been consigned to oblivion many years ago. The rehabilitation of the novelist was accomplished in the nick of time. Executed in 1739, the fame of that notorious highwayman had been kept alive by numerous chapbooks for three generations, but was on the eve of extinction in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. At that period the old coaching days were becoming little more than a memory, and with their passing all the exciting legends of "the road" were also fading away. In a few more years the name and fame of Dick Turpin would have suffered no revival save in that unexplored underworld of hair-raising fiction frequented only by the small boy of lawless tastes.

Then came the turn in Dick Turpin's fortunes. The tales of his daring exploits were still fresh in the memory of Bulwer Lytton when,

Digitized by Google

by the writing of "Paul Clifford," he resolved to demonstrate how the prisons and criminal laws of that period fostered "the habit of first corrupting the boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then hanging the man, at the first occasion, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders." To point this moral and adorn this tale, Lytton conceived the case of an illegitimate son of a prosperous villain deserted in a low London slum and the victim of evil influences. No reader of "Paul Clifford" can fail to recall the squalor of the disreputable ale-house where the young hero of the story is discovered when the story opens. At the age of twelve he has learnt to read, but unfortunately he is applying that accomplishment in an unprofitable manner. "Paul, my ben cull," asked his besotted foster-mother, "what gibberish hast got there?" "Turpin, the great highwayman," answered the lad, without lifting his eyes from the page.

What particular version of Turpin's life was affected by Paul Clifford his creator does not stop to explain, but, obviously it was sufficiently exciting to prompt the use of that adjective usually reserved for such monarchs as Alexander and Alfred. That many another

Digitized by Google

boy beside Paul Clifford has made a similar misapplication of the word "great" has been due, as hinted above, to the zeal with which Harrison Ainsworth, noting the success which attended Lytton's effort, devoted himself to the task of combining romance with roguery.

Probably in extenuation for the glowing colours in which, in the pages of "Rookwood," he painted the character and exploits of Turpin, Ainsworth explained that he was "the hero" of his boyhood. The novelist confessed to a life-long passion for highwaymen; that as a lad he would listen by the hour while his father narrated the doings of "Dauntless Dick," that "chief minion of the moor;" and that he had often lingered in ecstasy by those inns, and roadsides, and rivers traditionally associated with his lawless career.

Naturally, all this enthusiasm ripened to resplendent blossom in the pages of "Rookwood." Hardly has any other victim of the gallows been so richly garlanded with the flowers of rhetoric. It may be necessary later to destroy both their fragrance and beauty, but in the meantime a few of the choicest examples may be culled for temporary admiration.

"Rash daring was the main feature of Tur-

Digitized by Google

pin's character. Like our great Nelson he knew fear only by name."

"Turpin was the *ultimus Romanorum*, the last of a race, which (we were almost about to say, we regret) is now altogether extinct. Several successors he had, it is true, but no name worthy to be recorded after his own. With him expired the chivalrous spirit which animated successively the bosoms of so many knights of the road; with him died away that passionate love of enterprise, that high spirit of devotion to the fair sex, which was first breathed upon the highway by the gay, gallant Claude Du-Val, the Bayard of the Road — *le filou sans peur et sans reproche* — but which was extinguished at last by the cord that tied the heroic Turpin to the remorseless tree."

"The last of this race (for we must persist in maintaining that he *was* the last), Turpin, like the setting sun, threw up some parting rays of glory, and tinged the far highways with a lustre that may yet be traced like a cloud of dust raised by his horse's retreating heels."

"Beyond dispute he ruled as master of the road. His hands were, as yet, unstained with blood; he was ever prompt to check the disposition to outrage, and to prevent, as much as

Digitized by Google

lay in his power, the commission of violence by his associates."

"Unequalled in the command of his steed, the most singular feat that the whole race of the annals of horsemanship has to record was achieved by him."

"Turpin's external man was singularly prepossessing. It was especially so in the eyes of *the* sex, amongst whom not a single dissentient voice was to be heard. All concurred in thinking him a fine fellow; could plainly read his high courage in his bearing; his good breeding in his *débonnaire* deportment; and his manly beauty in his extravagant red whiskers."

Truly a gorgeous bouquet! But Ainsworth had still more flowers to adorn his hero. The fourth book of "Rookwood" is devoted to the expansion of the hint given to the effect that Turpin by riding from London to York on his famous Black Bess placed to his credit "the most singular feat" in the annals of horsemanship. Ainsworth was excessively proud of the twelve chapters in which he described that exploit. He put on record the name and locality of the house in which, in the space of less than twenty-four hours, he penned the hundred pages which tell of the ride to York. "Well do I

Digitized by Google

remember," he said, "the fever into which I was thrown during the time of composition. My pen literally scoured over the pages. So thoroughly did I identify myself with the flying highwayman that, once started, I found it impossible to halt. Animated by kindred enthusiasm, I cleared every obstacle in my path with as much facility as Turpin disposed of the impediments that beset his flight. In his company, I mounted the hillside, dashed through the bustling village, swept over the desolate heath, threaded the silent street, plunged into the eddying stream, and kept an onward course, without pause, without hindrance, without fatigue. With him I shouted, sang, laughed, exulted, wept. Nor did I retire to rest till, in imagination, I heard the bell of York Minster toll forth the knell of poor Black Bess."

Perhaps a highwayman did once ride from London to York in fifteen hours. And such a feat, the covering of nearly two hundred miles on one horse in so brief a space of time, deserved to be sung in glowing lines. But there is no evidence to show that it was accomplished by Turpin. On the other hand it seems highly probable that the ride actually was achieved in 1676 by another highwayman, Nevison by

Digitized by Google

name, and that his feat was transferred to Turpin for the purpose of enhancing the glory of that precious hero.

Whether Turpin was such a model as the novelist and schoolboy would have him to be is open to grave question. There can be no question, however, that he was a choice scoundrel. In the proclamation issued for his arrest in 1737, he is described as a native of Thaxted, in Essex, but that assertion is wrong. He was an Essexman, it is true, but it was at Hempstead, and not at Thaxted, he first saw the light. Some years ago, the Crown Inn at Hempstead was adorned with a board recording the fact that Dick Turpin was born within its walls, and although the board is gone the fact remains as one indisputable item in the highwayman's history. The exact date of his birth will probably never be known, but the parish register attests that Richard Turpin, the son of John and Mary Turpin, was baptized in the village church on Sept. 21st, 1705. On the coffin in which he received a felon's burial at York in 1739 his age was given as twenty-eight, but the Hempstead record proves that he must have escaped the gallows for thirty-four years at least.

And he might have escaped for many more

Digitized by Google

years than that if he had resisted the temptation to shoot a game-cock. It happened in this manner: Turpin was hiding in Yorkshire, under the assumed name of John Palmer, and, by cleverly stealing horses and then selling them to gentlemen with whom he used to hunt, he managed both to provide himself with daily bread and maintain a considerable position in the world. His horse-thefts, the latest of which had yielded a harvest of a mare and her foal, were not found out, but the charge brought home to him of shooting a game-cock led to a train of evidence which brought the appropriation of the mare and her foal to his door. Arrest and trial followed, and then there gathered such a cloud of witnesses around Turpin, including several Hempstead natives who had known him from birth, that it was no difficult matter to hang the noose round his throat.

Whoso would disentangle the real Dick Turpin from the mythical article must rely largely upon the evidence given at his trial in York, reported by one who described himself as a "possessor of shorthand." The Hempstead witnesses were almost indecently loquacious, and appear to have bent their best energies toward securing the conviction of their fellow-villager. Whether

Digitized by Google

TURPIN'S RING, HEMPSTEAD.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

they were jealous of the fair fame of their native hamlet, or were merely taking a belated revenge for some of Dick's boyish escapades, does not appear. They told, however, how Dick's father was both an innkeeper and a butcher, how Dick was a wild spirit from his earliest years, how his parents tried to sober him by marriage, and how, by the appearance of a rejected letter at the post-office, they had been able to identify the John Palmer in prison at York with the Richard Turpin too well known by them all.

That proclamation of 1737 already alluded to ignores the " manly beauty " and " extravagant red whiskers " of Ainsworth, and tersely describes Turpin as " about thirty, five feet nine inches high, brown complexion, very much marked with the smallpox, his cheek-bones broad, his face thinner towards the bottom, his visage short, pretty upright, and broad about the shoulders." Other evidence goes to show that instead of being that paragon of chivalry described by the novelist, Turpin's turn of mind led him more " towards seating old women on their fires, than meeting men in open fight."

Of the actual bearing of the man in the

Digitized by Google

presence of reliable witnesses there is no record more explicit than the account of his execution, which took place at York on April 7th, 1739. "The notorious Richard Turpin and Jack Stead," says the chronicler, "were executed at York for horse-stealing. Turpin behaved in an undaunted manner; as he mounted the ladder, feeling his right leg tremble, he stamped it down, and, looking round about him with an unconcerned air, he spoke a few words to the Topsman, then threw himself off and expired in five minutes." With the natural conceit of his kind, he had provided that he should be lamented in some fashion, for he left three pounds ten shillings to five men who were to follow his cart as mourners, in addition to hat-bands and gloves for them and several others. The body, enclosed in a "neat coffin," and bearing the inscription, "J. P. 1739. R. T. aged 28," was buried in St. George's churchyard. Early the next morning, however, it was "snatched," and carried off to the garden of one of the surgeons of the city. But the news soon spread, a mob quickly gathered, and, set upon saving the body from dissection, they placed it on a board and carried it back to the grave, this time taking the precaution to fill the coffin with lime, and so render

Digitized by Google

DICK TURPIN'S BIRTHPLACE.

TURPIN'S OAK.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

any subsequent "snatching" a useless enterprise.

Opposite the Crown Inn at Hempstead there is a clump of trees planted in a circle, and known as Turpin's Ring. How the highwayman's name came to be associated with this curious cluster of trees is a mystery. It is also puzzling to account satisfactorily for their having been planted in this unusual shape. The local tradition has it that this was the village cock-pit, or even the scene of Hempstead bear-baiting in the good old times.

Another Turpin relic may be seen at Dawkin's Farm, a mile or so from the village. This is merely the decaying trunk of the famous Hempstead oak, in the boughs of which Dick is reputed to have hidden from his pursuers. It would furnish but a meagre hiding-place to-day, but in Turpin's time it was a living forest-giant, with a girth of more than fifty feet, and branches spreading over a circumference of a hundred and five yards.

For all his shortcomings, at this distance of time we can afford to be charitable to the memory of Dick Turpin. He may not deserve the plea of Schiller, which discerns a spirit of genius beneath the guise of every robber; but, though his body

Digitized by Google

hung in no gibbet, he may be included among those outcasts for whom Villon wrote the immortal epitaph:

"The water of heaven has washed us clean,
The sun has scorched us black and bare,
Ravens and rooks they have pecked at our een,
And lined their nests with our beards and hair;
Round are we tossed, and here and there,
This way and that at the wild wind's will,
Not for a moment our bodies are still —
Birds they are busy about my face.
Be not as we, nor fare as we fare —
Pray God pardon us out of His grace."

Digitized by Google

XII

BEACONSFIELD

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BEACONSFIELD

GEORGE BANCROFT, writing to William H. Prescott from England on a summer day in 1847, entertained his fellow historian with a glowing account of a visit he had paid to that corner of Buckinghamshire made famous by the poet Gray. One of the most delightful memories of that vacation was concerned with a drive to the sequestered nook at Jordans where William Penn is buried.

"On the way back," Bancroft wrote, "we drove through Beaconsfield. At the name I cried out Edmund Burke; and straightway we went to the Gregories, traced the ruins of the old house, which was burned down: went into his garden, studied out his walks; and tried to get a picture of his life. The larder abounded with good things: many a hogshead of ale was drunk there. No one had such merry harvest homes. His name was cherished all about: from all

Digitized by Google

the villages round they came to his feasts. At the church which I entered, there was his pew, his grave, and the tablet in the wall to that part of him which was mortal. The churchyard has the tomb of Waller under a huge walnut tree: but Waller's huge monument does not move like the plain slab to Edmund Burke, who must have had a kind heart, easily touched with sympathy."

No surprise will be felt that the American historian was more impressed by the grave of the statesman than by that of the poet. Apart altogether from the memory of Burke's sturdy advocacy of the cause of his country, Bancroft was hardly the type of man to whom the peculiar muse of Waller could appeal. But other visitors to the peaceful and picturesque town of Beaconsfield are hardly like to make so marked a distinction between the resting-places of the two men.

Edmund Waller was a native of this district. His father was owner of the manor of Beaconsfield, and he was born in 1606 in the nearby hamlet of Coleshill. As his father died a decade later the poet came into the possession of the estate at a tender age, and here, in 1687, he died and was buried. Thus, unlike most children of

Digitized by Google

the muse, Waller was nurtured in affluence from his earliest days. As Oldham wrote:

> "Waller himself may thank inheritance
> For what he else had never got by sense."

Whether that reflection on the poet's incapacity to achieve success in a monetary sense was deserved may be open to question. Indeed, one stubborn fact to the contrary may be adduced. When he had reached a marriageable age he determined to effect the conquest of Anne Bankes, the wealthy heiress of a London merchant. But there were obstacles in his path. Other suitors had fixed their eyes on Mistress Anne as a prize worth striving for, and among these was a gentleman named William Crofts, who could count upon court influence to further his cause. But Waller was not dismayed. He so engineered his plans as to secure the abduction of the heiress, and shortly after Mistress Anne became his wife, greatly to the enrichment of his personal estate.

Had Waller's first wife lived he would not have passed through the experience which has contributed largely to the perpetuation of his memory. After bearing the poet a son in 1633, the London heiress succumbed at Beaconsfield

Digitized by Google

in giving birth to a daughter in the following year, leaving Waller a widower at the age of twenty-eight.

It was as a once-married man, then, that he began his famous wooing of Sacharissa, otherwise Lady Dorothy Sidney, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester. Waller has been frequently chided for presuming to look so high for a second wife. But it is difficult to see where the presumption comes in. His family was one of repute and antiquity; he was the owner of a considerable manor; and his income must have been fully as large as that of many a peer in the seventeenth century. But notwithstanding these advantages, and such further commendable qualities as arose from his attractive personal appearance and his repute as a poet, his wooing of Sacharissa ended in failure.

Perhaps he was not altogether surprised. In one of his earliest poems he is doubtful of his success.

> "As when, beyond our greedy reach, we see
> Inviting fruit on too sublime a tree;"

and later he bids his messenger carve on a tree the record of his passion that it may be a monument of

Digitized by Google

" His humble love whose hope shall ne'er rise higher,
Than for a pardon that he dares admire."

For a time, however, this premonition of ultimate failure had no chilling effect on his verse. He praises as liberally as though already secure in the possession of the object of his adoration. In none of the Sacharissa poems is there so warm a glow as in that entitled " On Her Coming to London," and as it has but lately been rescued from its manuscript obscurity a few of its stanzas may be cited here.

" What's she, so late from Penshurst come,
More gorgeous than the mid-day sun,
That all the world amazes?
Sure 'tis some angel from above,
Or 'tis the Cyprian Queen of Love
Attended by the Graces.

" O is't not Juno, Heaven's great dame,
Or Pallas armed, as on she came
To assist the Greeks in fight,
Or Cynthia, that huntress bold,
Or from old Tithon's bed so cold,
Aurora chasing night?

" No, none of these, yet one that shall
Compare, perhaps exceed them all,
For beauty, wit, and birth;
As good as great, as chaste as fair,

Digitized by Google

A brighter nymph none breathes the air,
Or treads upon the earth."

Sacharissa, however, evidently demanded in her husband something more than the ability to pen a well-turned line. On her side the poetic passion of Waller appears to have been opposed by indifference. Slowly the truth of the situation dawned upon Waller. At first he took what comfort he could from the reflection that

" What he sung in his immortal strain,
Though unsuccessful, was not sung in vain; "

then he offered the lady the proud reminder that

" Her beauty, too, had perished, and her fame,
Had not the muse redeemed them from the flame; "

and finally he reached a tone of stern remonstrance in the lines,

" To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the heaven! "

But Waller, to transfer Fielding's phrase from one sex to the other, was not so " whimsically capricious " that one woman only could satisfy his amorous propensities. That memorial in Beaconsfield Church which is adorned with a

Digitized by Google

heart in flames might have been set up in his honour instead of to another member of his family. Sacharissa seems to have had a rival before she wedded, and she certainly had successors speedily after that event. It was not, however, until 1644 that Waller found a second wife in the person of Mary Bracey, a lady of great beauty but who has left no impress on his poetry.

Apart from his dalliance with Sacharissa, there was a potent reason why Waller allowed ten years to elapse between his first and second marriage. In 1640 he became involved as a member of Parliament in the events which led to the Civil War, and, after trying the hazardous task of sitting on the fence for a few years, was eventually discovered to be a participant in a plot in favour of the King. Several of his fellow-conspirators — one a brother-in-law — were executed, but Waller saved his skin by wholesale confession, a piteous plea for mercy, and by willingly accepting a sentence which included a fine of ten thousand pounds and banishment from England.

But his exile only lasted eight years. The poet left his mother behind him at Beaconsfield, and she, as a relative of Oliver Cromwell, was no doubt largely responsible for her son being

Digitized by Google

allowed to return thither in 1652. The Protector appears to have been a frequent guest at Beaconsfield, and concerning one of his visits a story is told well calculated to arouse the flaming indignation of Carlyle. Waller was wont to relate, so the record runs, that when Cromwell had been called to the door in the midst of their conversations, he would overhear him repeating, "The Lord will reveal, the Lord will help," and kindred pious reflections; for which he would apologize when he came back, saying, "Cousin Waller, I must talk to these men after their own way," and would then resume the talk where it had been broken off.

While the Commonwealth régime lasted Waller wisely remained in rural retirement at Beaconsfield. Ever a courtier, no matter who was in power, he occupied some of his leisure in penning his "Panegyric to my Lord Protector," the poetic effort which Charles II remarked on as superior to Waller's lines on his own return to the throne, thus eliciting the famous retort — "Sire, poets always succeed better in composing fiction than in adorning truth." The King was a penetrating critic; Waller's lines on Cromwell have far more poetic value than those on the "happy return;" indeed, waiving the note of

Digitized by Google

flattery by which they are pervaded, they betray greater evidence of genius than any other effort of the poet.

With the re-establishment of the monarchy Waller returned to Parliament and to those gatherings of wit and fashion which had known him in earlier years. Thus it happened that he met Sacharissa again, now a widow. The passing years had altered them both. "When, I wonder," the lady asked, "will you write such beautiful verses to me?" To which Waller rejoined, much to the horror of Taine in a later age, "When, Madam, you are as young and handsome as you were then."

To Waller, as to many more, years brought the philosophic mind. In his peaceful home at Beaconsfield he was able, from the vantage ground of more than eighty years, to look back unperturbed on the passions which had vexed his soul in earlier days. And the pen which had busied itself with the trifles of an hour, had toyed with love and been traitor to loyalty, is found moving to such sober strains as these:

"The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;
So calm are we when passions are no more!
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.

Digitized by Google

Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal the emptiness which age descries."

Even the trees at Beaconsfield had their lesson for the aged poet. He told a correspondent, however, that he had not much joy in wandering through his woods, because he found the trees as bare and withered as himself, with this difference —

"That shortly they shall flourish and wax green,
But I still old and withered must be seen,
Yet if vain thoughts fall, like their leaves away,
The nobler part improves with that decay."

As the inevitable end drew near the poet bought a small house at Coleshill, the hamlet where he was born, to placate his poetic sentiment that "a stag, when he is hunted, and near spent, always returns home." But it was in his manor house of Hall Barn at Beaconsfield, and not at Coleshill, that Waller died. And there, in a corner of the churchyard, beneath a lusty tree, he was laid to rest at last. His massive monument, a large sarcophagus of white marble with four urns on a central pyramid, wears well. More than two centuries have passed since it was reared over the remains of Sacharissa's

Digitized by Google

THE GRAVE OF WALLER.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

lover, and it bids fair to outlive other centuries yet. Unfortunately his contention that

> " 'Tis fit the English reader should be told,
> In his own language, what this tomb does hold,"

has not been respected in the case of his own memorial. Each of the inscriptions on the four sides of the monument is couched in Latin, so that it is only one here and there of the visitors to Beaconsfield who learns how high was the poetic fame of Waller at the time of his death.

How striking is the contrast between the copious and sonorous Latin on Waller's tomb and the brief and simple English of the tablet to Edmund Burke! The latter must be sought inside the church, on the wall of the south aisle, and near the pew where the great publicist used to worship. That this memorial is so unpretentious, that, in fact, this retired church should have been chosen for the honour of Burke's resting-place, was in obedient harmony with the illustrious statesman's own wishes. When a young man he had expressed a preference for " the southern corner of a country churchyard " as his place of rest, desiderating, however, that his remains should " mingle with kindred dust; " and as death drew nigh he stipulated in his will

Digitized by Google

for a simple funeral, adding, "I desire that no monument beyond a middle-sized tablet, with a small and simple inscription on the church-wall, or on the flag-stone, be erected. I say this," he concluded, "because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends; but I have had, in my lifetime, but too much noise and compliment."

BURKE'S MEMORIAL IN BEACONSFIELD CHURCH

Burke was thirty-eight years old when he made Beaconsfield his country home. The purchase of Gregories, the name of his estate, was made from the Waller manor, and the actual transaction is said to have taken place in the poet's mansion. Various explanations have been offered

Digitized by Google

to account for Burke, whose finances were never in a flourishing condition, being possessed of the twenty thousand pounds paid for Gregories, and one version asserts that the sum was placed at his disposal by a peer whom he had served politically. The narrator of this story affirmed that he was present at the purchase, and was wont to describe "the brilliancy which flashed from the eye of Burke on his first grasping the precious boon."

However the great orator became the owner of Gregories, his advent to this beautiful corner of Buckinghamshire was greatly to the advantage of the estate and Beaconsfield in general. Although he has been dead more than a century local tradition still testifies to his beneficient influence. Not only did he carry out notable improvements on his own property, and prove an admirable purveyor for his own table, but he took a paternal interest in all the workmen of the neighbourhood and spared himself no efforts in advancing their interests.

Many notable persons of the eighteenth century, Dr. Johnson being of the number, came as guests to Beaconsfield, all of whom would doubtless have cheerfully subscribed to the

Digitized by Google

truthfulness of Mary Leadbeater's poetic record of such an experience.

"Lo! there the mansion stands in princely pride;
The beauteous wings extend on either side;
Unsocial pomp flies from the cheerful gate,
Where hospitality delights to wait;
A brighter grace her candid smile bestows
Than the majestic pillars' comely rows.
Enter these ever-open doors, and find
All that can strike the eye, or charm the mind:
Painting and sculpture there their pride display,
And splendid chambers deck'd in rich array.
But these are not the honours of the dome
Where Burke resides and strangers find a home;
To whose glad hearth the social virtues move,
Paternal fondness and connubial love,
Benevolence unwearied, friendship true,
And wit unforced, and converse ever new,
And manners, where the polished court we trace,
Combined with artless nature's noble grace.
See where amid the tow'ring trees he moves,
And with his presence dignifies the groves:
Approach with silent awe the wondrous man,
While his great mind revolves some mighty plan;
Yet fear not from his brow a frown austere,
For mild benevolence inhabits there;
And while thine eye feasts on his graceful mien,
Think on the worth that lies within unseen,
And own that Heav'n in wisdom has enshrined
In the most perfect form the noblest mind."

Flattering as this picture is, independent

Digitized by Google

testimony proves that it was much more than the effort of a guest trying to offer some recompense for generous hospitality. Each separate record of Burke's life at Beaconsfield corroborates some specific detail of Mary Leadbeater's glowing tribute. Especially is it true that " parental fondness and connubial love " were constantly in evidence there. The record should have included brotherly affection also, for Burke was hardly more deeply attached to his wife and son than he was to that brother Richard who shares the Beaconsfield grave.

Keen as were the sufferings which the patriotic statesman experienced because of the untoward course of events in America and France, those public sorrows faded into insignificance before the private griefs which attacked him on the side of his domestic affections. Twice within six months death exacted its relentless toll in the persons of two who were nearest to his heart. The first victim was his younger brother, Richard, who for many years had been a member of the Beaconsfield household and in all other respects an intimate sharer of Burke's friendships and pursuits. Twenty years earlier Goldsmith had immortalized Richard Burke in his " Retaliation," that lively portrait-gallery

Digitized by Google

which preserves the characteristics of so many notable men of the eighteenth century:

"Here lies honest Richard whose fate I must sigh at;
Alas that such frolic should now be so quiet!
What spirits were his! What wit and what whim!
Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb;
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball,
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!
In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
That we wished him full ten times a day at Old Nick;
But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
As often we wished to have Dick back again."

It is not difficult to imagine how great a blank in the small circle at Beaconsfield the loss of so sprightly a companion would create. But a far heavier loss fell upon Burke when, in August, 1794, his only son was taken from his side. All his hopes had been centered in him. Great as may have been and probably were the gifts of the younger Burke, named Richard after his uncle, the father's fond affection magnified them into a brilliance far exceeding his own, and he consequently looked upon his child not only as the heir of his own renown but as destined to achieve a still greater fame. Burke, too, had the passion for "founding a family," which is so often the one weakness of public men, and the

Digitized by Google

remorseless extinction of that hope added poignancy to his loss. How deeply that loss was felt is evident on page after page of Burke's letters during the few remaining years of his own life. "My heart is very sick," he writes to one correspondent; "I am as a man dead," to another; and in his Letter to a Noble Lord he calls to his aid every image of desolation: "The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lie prostrate on the earth. I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate."

So heavy a sorrow could not be borne for long. After the death of his son Burke did not dine out of his own house; henceforth in travelling from Gregories to London he avoided passing through Beaconsfield, because he could not endure the sight of the church where Richard was buried. But everything conspired to remind him of his loss. While walking one day in his fields Burke found himself approached by an aged horse which had been a great favourite with his son. The animal drew nearer, is said to have spent some moments in surveying his person, and then to have rested his head upon

Digitized by Google

his bosom. What response could the afflicted Burke make other than to throw his arms around the horse's neck and give way to a flood of tears?

But for Burke himself the days were now rapidly shortening. In February, 1797, he was persuaded to go to Bath for the benefit of the waters, but as a four months' sojourn there could do nothing for the sorrow which was sapping his life, he returned, at the end of May, to Beaconsfield, "to be so far at least on my way to the tomb." A little more than a month later he found the peace he desired, rejoining in the grave that affectionate brother and that adored son whom he had missed so sorely. Nearly fifteen years after Mary Burke was laid in the same tomb, and thus at last the "eloquent statesman and sage" had his wish that his ashes should "mingle with kindred dust."

Digitized by Google

XIII

THE NORFOLK BROADS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE NORFOLK BROADS

A COUNTY instead of a city, massive wherries and dainty yachts instead of gondolas, mill-towers and church steeples instead of palaces — such are the differences between Venice and Norfolk. But the essential likeness is the same; both in the city of the Adriatic and the English county the chief highways are waterways. Where the choice of transit lies between the hard roadway and the limpid path of river or Broad, the Norfolk man never hesitates which to take.

But what are the Norfolk Broads? Roughly speaking, they are a series of small fresh water lakes connected by rivers and dykes. The word "Broad" is generally interpreted by its surface meaning, that is, a piece of water which has broadened out from its original narrow channel. Altogether these Broads and their connecting rivers furnish forth some two hundred miles of waterway, providing unlimited scope for yachting, fishing, or shooting.

Digitized by Google

There are two methods of seeing the Norfolk Broads. The visitor may hire one of the characteristic boats of the district and thread the two hundred miles of waterway in as leisurely a fashion as befits the time at his disposal; or he may make his home in one of the many farm or private houses which have opened their doors to holiday keepers, and use that as the centre of his explorations. Every man to his choice. If it is a family holiday party, the boat method has its inherent difficulties and discomforts; if the party comprises only two or more young men bent on an unconventional vacation, a few weeks' experience of fresh-water yachting possesses undeniable attractions. Perhaps the real charm of the Broads does not reveal itself to those who make choice of the house instead of the boat; they know nothing of the luxury of being lulled to sleep by the soughing of the wind-swayed rushes, or the gentle lapping of the water against the boat's side; not theirs the keen-edged appetite which relishes even the most primitively-served meal amid unusual surroundings.

Wroxham is a favourite starting-place with those who elect the boat method of visiting the Broads; but it is by no means an ideal centre

Digitized by Google

for those who wish the unworn beauty of Broadland to play upon their town-jaded spirits. Because it is such a popular port of departure it has taken on too many of the airs of a tourist resort; it has all the bad qualities of *urbe in rus*. There are shops in the transition stage from the rural store to the city emporium; hotels with "pleasure gardens" and bands "made in Germany;" merry-go-rounds which aim at greater conquests than village fairs; Aunt-Sallys which too painfully recall Bank Holiday memories of Greenwich Park and Hampstead Heath. One does not travel a hundred miles from London for such commonplaces as these. But because Wroxham is a good place to get away from, it may be recommended as the starting-point for a cruise among the Broads. Here, where the river Bure widens out to a

AT WROXHAM

Digitized by Google

respectable breadth, boats are plentiful, though it would be the height of folly to leave the chartering of one's craft until the hour of arrival. Such a policy would probably achieve an unlooked for Nemesis either in a vain effort to secure a yacht, or in such an experience of Hobson's choice as would not add to the pleasure of the trip.

Quickly will the visitor to the Broads make the acquaintance of one of the most typical words of the district, the word "Staithe"; but he will probably reflect little on the period of English history from which it has survived. Those Danish hordes which the pirate fleets of the Norwegian fiords poured upon the coast of East Anglia in the ninth century brought with them copious additions to the place-names of the districts they spoiled, and this word "Staithe" is one of the memorials of their visits. Originally, perhaps, the word meant an abode or station; but it soon took on a new shade of meaning by being used to describe a portion of the foreshore of a river kept up by faggots — and hence its application to-day to the innumerable landing places of the rivers and dykes in the Broads. Sometimes these staithes are the public quays of villages or towns, but in many cases — as

Digitized by Google

HORNING FERRY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

at Catfield — they are the private wharves of wherry owners. Even in the latter circumstances the holiday seeker will only have his own behaviour to blame if he is not made free of their use.

Save for that held at Wroxham, the regattas of the various Broads are simply rural festivities of an aquatic kind. They make no stir in the yachting world; their rivalries find no record in the London press. Each competitor is known to each, and all to the spectator. An amateur band, a few stalls sacred to ginger-beer, biscuits and vinegar-soused whelks, a liberal provision of wicker-cased gallon jars of ale, a display of the most suitable summer attire procurable from rural stores — such are the outward furnishings of a Broads regatta. But enjoyment loses none of its edge. Doctor measures his sailing skill with rector, schoolmaster strives for victory with farmer, and all will hoard up memories of the day as food for village gossip until the revolving year brings back the opportunity to reverse defeats or win new renown.

Amid the fleets of snow-white-sailed yachts which crowd Broads and rivers alike during the summer months, the characteristic wherry of the district asserts its individuality with dignified per-

Digitized by Google

sistence. These sturdy craft, sometimes of seventy tons burden, constitute one of the chief carrying powers of the Broads, and the adroit manner in which they are sailed up narrow dykes or quanted along in a dead calm impresses the

A NORFOLK DYKE

visitor as a unique exhibition of sailing skill. Although they seem so unwieldy, these wherries can attain a speed of seven or eight miles an hour in a strong wind, and their huge brown sails often lend to the landscape amid which they move a tone of warmth very agreeable to the eye.

One of the essential features of the Broads

Digitized by Google

landscape is provided by the dyke; too frequently its presence is aggressively felt. When the wind dies away, the towing which has to supply its place as motive power is often abruptly punctuated by the too persistent dyke, just too wide to jump and yet narrow enough to make a return to the boat wear the air of a cowardly retreat. A judicious distribution of wide planks among the Norfolk Broads would tend to the diminution of profane language. But even these dykes have their uses for beauty as well as utility. On their placid waters the broad leaves of the water lilies lave themselves in freshness and open out their golden and snowy blossoms to charge the air with a perfume as rare in quality as a nightingale's song. There are degrees of dignity in Norfolk dykes. The narrowest merely serve as drains for fields or give access to a private landing; the broadest are the highways of the trading wherries and lead to the ports of villages.

Horning Ferry, with its quaint old inn, with its band of singing children who cultivate melody for the base reward of coppers, has always been a popular halting place with visitors to the Broads. Certainly along the reaches of the Bure from Wroxham to St. Benet's Abbey there

Digitized by Google

are few riverside pictures so arresting as Horning Street and Horning Ferry — the former with its picturesquely massed warehouses and windmill, the latter with its bosky trees and reduplication of shadows in the river's placid mirror. At the Ferry many a merry summer evening party has met to live over again the delights of the day; and this old-world hostel must linger in the memory of thousands who owe to it

> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart.

A young lad fresh from India, who spent a holiday in the Broads, is reported to have employed all his days in making toy windmills. That was his tribute to the presiding genius of the district. It was quite natural; even the most inattentive observer cannot fail to be impressed by the ubiquity of windmills among the Broads. Of course the bulk of them were built for drainage purposes, and it is often possible to map out the courses of rivers by these mills. But steam is fatal to the picturesque here, as it has been in other phases of English rural life. Most of the old windmills are falling into decay, and ere many generations have gone they will have vanished altogether. Happily the

Digitized by Google

ON THE BURE.

HARVEST IN THE BROADS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

quaint boatyards which relieve the banks of river and Broad here and there have a more tenacious hold on existence:

> Covering many a rood of ground,
> Lay the timber piled around;
> Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
> And scattered here and there, with these,
> The knarred and crooked cedar knees.

No anglers' stories wear such an air of fable as those which are told among the Norfolk Broads. The most plentiful fish is the bream; and here it is possible to realize that French proverb which measures the warmth of one's welcome of a friend by the quantity of bream in one's pond. Old Izaac asserts that in water and air to its taste the bream will grow as "fat as a hog;" and the fact that the fish sometimes attains a weight of ten pounds proves the aquatic and atmospheric conditions of the Broads to be wholly to its liking. Eels, too, must find these waters congenial to existence; and many tons of that savoury fish find they way from the Norfolk Broads to the London market. The eel-fisher's primitive home, a derelict boat with a rude hut covering it in, often greets the voyager from amid its thicket of rushes, a suggestive

Digitized by Google

survival of a time when the conditions of life were simpler and ruder than in this twentieth century.

It is commonly believed that some of the Broads are fast growing up. One authority on the district points out with reference to a certain Broad that the vegetation grows rankly and dies down, and so adds a layer both in thickness and extent to the shallow margin. When, by a repetition of this process, the mud reaches the surface, the roots of the reeds and grasses make it firmer each year, until at last it can be drained and turned into dry land. Stalham Broad is said to be illustrating this process; but an "oldest inhabitant" scornfully protested that the Broad is as big to-day as at any time within his memory. Womack Broad has had a curious experience. At one period this consisted of nearly fifty acres of water, but during a storm a floating island was blown into its midst and, anchoring on a shallow spot, has turned some of its area into a boggy swamp. Thus it has come about that Womack is now little more than a narrow river channel.

As might be expected, the architecture of the Broads, both domestic and ecclesiastical, harmonizes with the spirit of the district. It is true

Digitized by Google

that at such places as Wroxham there are not wanting examples of Ruskin's pet abomination, modern villas "with patent everythings going by themselves everywhere;" and the "restorer" has been at work on some of the churches. But the further one penetrates into the heart of Broadland the less one sees of modern influences. The churches, with their round towers and thatched roofs — of which that of Potter Heigham is a good type — recreate a mediæval atmosphere and enable us to bridge that "gulf of mystery" that lies between us and the old English. The cottages, with their bright little windows and trim gardens stocked with the old favourite out-of-fashion flowers, make the heart to fall in love with rural life; and here and there a homestead peeps from amid embowering trees to recall the home memories which are awakened by Hood's well-known lines:

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

Digitized by Google

When at length the last mile has been sailed and a tender farewell taken of these peaceful meadows and reed-bound waters, one realizes how impossible it is to convey to others any adequate idea of the subtle charm of Broadland. Among the granite and slate mountains of Central Europe there grows, in the clefts of rocks and in dimly-lit caves, a delicate little plant which has been christened with the name of "Luminous Moss." If the botanist peers into these dusky recesses, he will see, amid the gloom, innumerable golden-green points of light, which sparkle and gleam as though small emeralds had been scattered over the floor. But if he grasps some of these alluring jewels and examines his prize in the glare of the open day, he will find that he has nothing in his hand but dull lustreless earth. The Luminous Moss reveals its beauty only when seen amid its natural surroundings. It is so with the Norfolk Broads. No words can express their peculiar charm; no pictures can hope to delineate their quiet beauty.

Digitized by Google

HOME FROM THE BROADS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

XIV

IN THE LINCOLNSHIRE FENS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

IN THE LINCOLNSHIRE FENS

BE-COBWEBBED as is the face of England with railway lines, there still remain a few tracts of land where the steel net-work is less closely woven. This is notably the case in that triangular corner of the south of Lincolnshire known as the Fens.

Taken as a whole, that county is less familiar to the native or the visitor than any other district of England. Save for its capital city, and an isolated town here and there, Lincolnshire stands either strangely outside the pale of intimate acquaintance or is known only to be mis-known. Especially is this true of the Fens. Notwithstanding the spread of knowledge and the increase of travel, nine persons out of ten still probably labour under the delusion that "to live in Lincolnshire means little short of floundering in a swamp and shivering with ague." It is beyond question that "the Fens have obtained a world-wide notoriety; and a general, though very erroneous, impression pre-

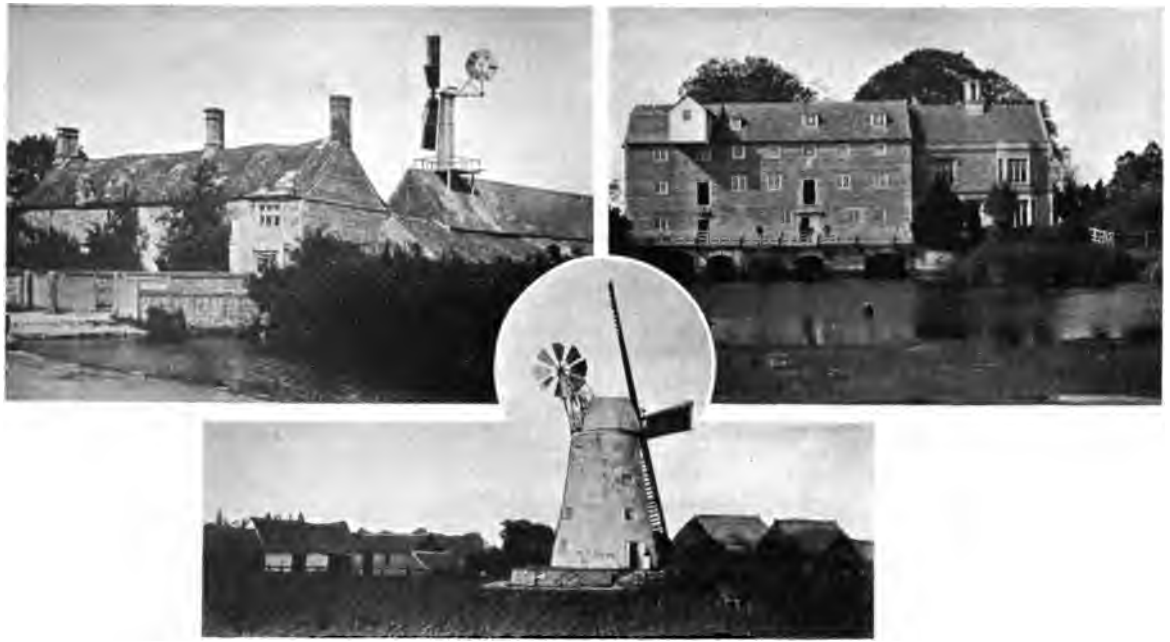
Digitized by Google

vails among those who do not know the county, that this part of Lincolnshire is a dull and dreary land, to be avoided by all except those whom necessity or the calls of business compel to visit its unattractive scenery."

How tenaciously an ill-reputation persists! To-day's opinion of the Fens is little more than an echo of that entertained successively by the Roman and Norman conquerors of Britain. Judging from casual remarks in Tacitus and other writers, when the Romans descended on Britain this district was little more than a vast morass with a few scattered islands on which the Fen folk passed a semi-amphibious existence. No wonder the district became a camp of refuge for the Britons. The hunted Britons, as Marcellinus records, "not dwelling in the towns but in cottages within fenny places, compassed with thick woods, having hidden whatsoever they had most estimation of, did more annoyance to the wearied Romans than they received from them."

Centuries later the Norman invaders were held at bay as their Roman forerunners had been. When William the Conqueror had all the rest of England at his feet, the Fens remained unsubdued. "What the rock and defile

Digitized by Google



WIND AND WATER MILLS OF THE FENS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

were to the mountaineer, the reed field and mere were to the Fenman — his home, the source of his subsistence, and his defence in seasons of oppression or misfortune." Hither, then, as to a final stronghold, resorted the last Saxon defiers of the Norman invaders. "This land," as Dugdale noted, "environed with fens and reed plecks was impassable; so that they feared not the invasion of an enemy, and in consequence of the strength of this place, by reason of the said water encompassing it, divers of the principal nobility of the English nation had recourse unto it as their greatest refuge against the strength and power of the Norman Conqueror."

In the annals of patrotism there are no more stirring pages than those which tell how Hereward, the last of the English, resisted the power of William the Conqueror in the Fens of Lincolnshire. For seven long years, as Kingsley tells, he and his stout-hearted followers held their own against the Norman invader, and fought till there were none left to fight. "Their bones lay white on every island in the Fens; their corpses rotted on the gallows beneath every Norman keep; their few survivors crawled into monasteries, with eyes picked out, or hands

Digitized by Google

and feet cut off; or took to the wild woods as strong outlaws. . . . But they never really bent their necks to the Norman yoke."

Romans and Normans, then, had good cause to hold the Fens in abhorrence. But that the evil repute of those far-off times should persist in these changed and peaceful years is inexcusable. All those qualities which made the Fens an ideal refuge for the oppressed have disappeared. Long centuries ago they were dyked and drained, tilled and fenced, until now they have "a beauty as of the sea, of boundless expanse and freedom. For always, from the foot of the wolds," continues Kingsley, "the green flat stretched away, illimitable, to an horizon where, from the roundness of the earth, the distant trees and islands were hulled down like ships at sea. The firm horse-fen lay, bright green, along the foot of the wold; beyond it, the browner peat, or deep fen; and among it dark velvet alder beds, long lines of reed-rond, emersed in spring and golden under the autumn sun; shining river-reaches; broad meres dotted with a million fowl, while the cattle waded along their edges after the rich sedge-grass, or wallowed in the mire through the hot summer day. Here and there, too, upon

Digitized by Google

the far horizon, rose a tall line of ashen trees, marking some island of firm rich soil. Here and there, too, as at Ramsey and Crowland, the huge ashes had disappeared before the axes of the monks, and a minster tower rose over the fen, amid orchards, gardens, cornfields, pastures, with here and there a tree left standing for shade, — ' Painted with flowers in the spring,' with ' pleasant shores embosomed in still lakes,' as the monk-chronicler of Ramsey has it, those islands seemed to such as the monk terrestrial paradises. Overhead the arch of heaven spread more ample than elsewhere, as over the open sea; and what vastness gave, and still gives, such effects of cloudland, of sunrise and sunset, as can be seen nowhere else within these isles."

Strangely enough, it was not left to Kingsley to discover the beauty of the Fens. Despite the popular impression that this district is " a dull and dreary land," it would be possible to compile an anthology in its praise. For example, so long ago as the twelfth century Henry of Huntington wrote: " This fenny country is very pleasant and agreeable to the eye, watered by many rivers which run through it, and adorned with many roads and islands." Earlier still

Digitized by Google

William of Malmsbury described the Fens as "a very paradise and a heaven for the beauty and delight thereof, the very marshes bearing goodly trees. . . . There is such abundance of fish as to cause astonishment to strangers, while natives laugh at their surprise. Water fowl are so plentiful that persons may not only assuage their hunger with both sorts of food, but can eat to satisfy for a penny." Nor should the eulogy of Fuller be overlooked, whose quaint verdict runs thus: "As God hath, to use the apostle's phrase, tempered the body together, not making all eye or all ear, but assigning each member the proper office thereof, so the same Providence hath so wisely blended the benefits of this county that, take collective Lincolnshire and it is defective in nothing."

Naturally, neither of these encomiums touches upon just that characteristic of the Fens which has the most potent charm for the visitor to-day. All that Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Malmsbury, and Charles Kingsley have written in praise of the peculiar natural beauty of the Fens is strictly true; here may be enjoyed as sunny skies, as clear starlight-nights, as gorgeous cloudscapes, as in any district of England; but this peaceful, remote land has a more

Digitized by Google

subtle attraction still. Nowhere in England is it possible to come into such close contact with a time and a people belonging so essentially to the past. "Between us and the old English," as Froude has remarked in sentences of rare charm, "there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the aisles of the cathedral, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive; and perhaps in the sound of church-bells, that peculiar creation of mediæval age, which falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world."

Thanks to its aloofness from the outside world, which is guarded by the sparsity of railway communication, the Fen district of Lincolnshire knows little of the changes wrought by the passing of time. Here the centuries have followed each other in almost alterationless succession. Since those years, remote in themselves, when the Fens were drained, when these marshy acres were reclaimed from the dominion of wide-spreading waters, when the wayward rivers were restrained within high banks, and the

Digitized by Google

haunts of fish and water-fowl were transformed into golden cornfields, the aspect of the country-side has known no change. For still longer years has this been true of the handiwork of man.

To visit Crowland in a sympathetic spirit is to step back into the vanished world of the old English. Even if the pilgrim makes such a concession to modern methods as to order his approach from the nearest railway station, that railway station is so inconspicuous, so slumberous for most of the day, and so soon out of sight and hearing, that the dominance of the present need not persist for long. As he traverses the miles of level Fenland that intervene it will be strange if his spirit is not rightly attuned for the unalloyed enjoyment which Crowland has in store. Far away on the horizon the tall grey tower of Crowland Abbey rears itself out of a verdant landscape, " a poem in stone, laden with ancient legend and fraught with misty history." Nor will the wayfarer fail to be impressed by that brooding silence which a sympathetic pilgrim noted as the most striking quality of the district. " On every side the level Fenland stretched broad as the sea, and to the eye appearing almost as broad and free; and from all this vast low-

Digitized by Google

CROWLAND ABBEY.

GRETFORD HALL.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

land tract came no sound except the hardly to be distinguished mellow murmuring of the wind among the nearer sedges and trees. The river flowed on below us in sluggish contentment without even an audible gurgle; no birds were singing, and, as far as we could see, there were no birds

ON THE WELLAND

to sing; and in the midst of this profound stillness our very voices seemed preternaturally loud."

On the waters of that sluggish river, however, — the Welland which moves ever on to the sea between its weed and willow-veiled banks — the eye which has gazed upon the past can behold the shadowy outlines of the barge which, nine centuries ago, bore the monk-attended bier of Hereward to its rest in the minster of the Fens.

Digitized by Google

And on by Porsand and by Asendyke,
By winding reaches on, and shining meres
Between grey reed-ronds and green alder-beds,
A dirge of monks and wail of women rose,
In vain to Heaven for the last Englishman.

Nor will the imagination rest on that picture as its remotest goal. Passing lightly over the years it will gaze back four other centuries, and recall how Guthlac, a brave yet gentle youth of the royal race of Mercia, betook himself hither that he might make his peace with God. Nigh twelve centuries have passed since this royal recluse found a biographer through whose vivid pages we can re-picture the "fen of unmeasured mickleness" to which Guthlac fled. "There stretch out unmeasured marshes, now a swart waterpool, now foul running streams, and eke many islands and reeds, and hillocks, and thickets, and with manifold windings, wide and long, it spreads out up to the northern sea."

Equally direct is the story this biographer tells to account for Guthlac seeking refuge here. With his dawning manhood there came the memory of the great deeds heroes had wrought, and he forthwith resolved to emulate their exploits. So Guthlac gathered to his standard a troop of daring spirits, and for nine winters

Digitized by Google

he and his men ravaged the country far and wide. But suddenly there came a change. "It happened one night, on coming back from an outfaring, as he rested his weary limbs, that he thought over many things in his mind, and he was suddenly moved with the awe of God and his heart was filled within with ghostly love; and when he awoke, he thought on the old kings that were of yore, who, through mindfulness of wretched death and the sore outgoing of a sinful life, forsook the world, and he saw of a sudden vanish away all the great wealth they had, and his own life hasten and hurry to an end, and he vowed to God that he would be his servant, and arising when it was day signed himself with the sign of Christ's rood."

In such wise Guthlac became the founder of Crowland Abbey. At first he sought refuge in the monastery at Pepton, but, resolving to become an anchorite, it was not long ere he made enquiry as to some remote, desolate spot to which he could retire. At this juncture he met a Fenman named Tatwine, who painted an appalling picture of a secret island known to himself. Many had attempted to inhabit it, so Tatwine declared, "but could not for the strange and uncouth monsters and several

Digitized by Google

terrors with which they were affrighted." Apparently Guthlac's interest in the place increased in proportion as Tatwine depicted its gruesome qualities, and the graphic describer was at length prevailed upon to convey the royal youth thither. It proved to be a small island in the heart of the Fens, and here Guthlac built himself a house and chapel, close to the site of the present half-ruined Abbey.

Guthlac took up his abode at Crowland in 697, and seventeen years later he died. If his biographer is to be believed, the " strange and uncouth monsters " resented his intrusion. Hardly had he built his rude hut than, " being awoke in the night time, betwixt his hours of prayer, as he was accustomed, of a sudden he discerned his cell to be full of black troops of unclean spirits, which crept in under the door, as also at chinks and holes, and coming in, both out of the sky and from the earth, filled the air as it were with dark clouds." Lest the sceptical should dismiss these unclean spirits as mere figments of the imagination, the biographer gravely records that they " first bound the holy man; and drew him out of his cell, and cast him over head and ears into the dirty fen; and having so done, carried him through

Digitized by Google

the most rough and troublesome parts thereof, drawing him amongst brambles and briers for the tearing of his limbs."

But, happily, there is a brighter side to Guthlac's life at Crowland. If he had bad dreams, which were probably distorted recollections of the cruelties he and his band had inflicted in their lawless raids, he did not lack compensation. The ravens of the Fens were at his command, and the fishes and the wild beasts. When talking one day with his friend Wilfrith, two swallows suddenly flew into the room, and perching now on the shoulders and anon on the breast and arms and knees of Guthlac, filled the place with melody. To the surprised enquiry of his visitor Guthlac answered, "Hast thou never learnt, brother Wilfrith, in holy writ, that the wild deer and the wild birds were nearer to him who hath led his life after the will of God?"

Nor was that all. In the less objective realm of spirit land the unclean monsters were met for Guthlac by radiant opponents. Especially was this so when he came to die. Though the "whirring arrow-storm" of death smote hard on the anchorite's spirit, a visitant of light enabled him to withstand the shock and fortified him for victory. Even his breath in that hour

Digitized by Google

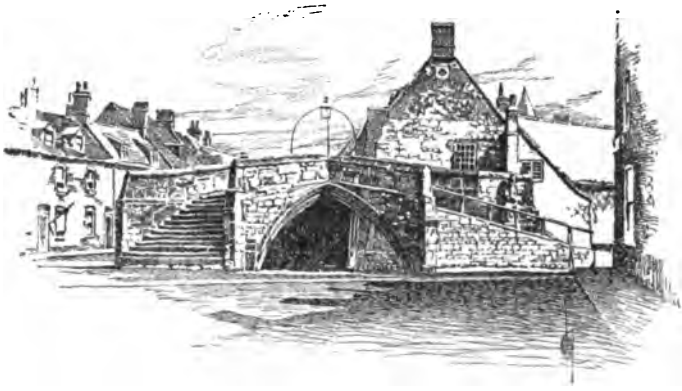
of trial was " as the blowing herbs in summer time, which — each in its own stead — winsome o'er the meadows, dropping honey, sweetly smell."

Two years after Guthlac passed away Ethelbald, King of Mercia, built a monastery to his memory, endowing it with the island of Crowland and the adjacent Fenland. Several centuries later, however, that building was destroyed by fire, thus making way for the present more enduring structure, the foundations of which were laid in the early days of the twelfth century. How greatly in the meantime the fame of Guthlac and Crowland had increased is evident from the fact that two abbots, two earls, one hundred knights and more than five thousand people gathered for the laying of the first stone of the new abbey.

Seven centuries have dimmed the architectural glory of Crowland Abbey. Although Cromwell was here in the early days of the Civil War, his presence being necessary to raise the siege of the place, for a rare exception he is not saddled with responsibility for the decaying condition of the building. That is probably accounted for by the flowing of the tide of life elsewhere. One section of the building is still

Digitized by Google

in use as the parish church, but the glorious nave is a thing of the past, only the gaunt framework of its massive walls surviving to convey some suggestion of its spacious proportions. Time, too, has wrought havoc with the west front of the building, the tracery of one window having



THE TRIANGULAR BRIDGE, CROWLAND

wholly disappeared and many of the surviving niches been denuded of their figures. Notwithstanding these irreparable losses, sufficient of this historic building remains to feed the imagination and enable it to reconstruct unforgettable pictures of a memorable past.

Besides, Crowland does not depend alone upon its Abbey for its power to project the

Digitized by Google

visitor back into the vanished world of the old English. Within a stone's throw of the ancient minster, stranded high and dry in the main street of this remote little town, is a relic of the past the like of which can be seen nowhere else in the world. This is the celebrated triangular bridge, perhaps the most interesting curiosity in the annals of architecture. Some amusing and ingenious theories have been advanced to account for the erection of such a singular structure as a bridge with three arches having one centre for all. But the solution of the problem is simple. Long centuries ago the river Welland divided into two streams at this point, and as three roads converged here the old builders surmounted the difficulty by building an arch for each stream and combining the three arches at what should have been the apex of each. This clever device is of hoary antiquity; a charter of the remote year 943 makes mention of Crowland's "triangular bridge;" but the present successor of that novel structure was probably built in the fourteenth century. As the causeway over the bridge is only eight feet wide, and moreover exceedingly steep, it was obviously adapted for foot and horse passengers only.

Digitized by Google

WEST DEEPING CHURCH AND FONT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Wander whither he will among the Fens of Lincolnshire the visitor need fear no disturbance of that sense of communion with the past which Crowland creates. Everything seems touched with "the golden stain of time." Even such a building as Gretford Hall, the mullioned windows of which have thrown their image into their watery mirror since the days of Queen Elizabeth, seems a modern structure in this land of ancient abbeys and churches and dwellings. No district in England can excel the Fenland for the beauty and age of its ecclesiastical architecture. Here a village will display a parish church of the graceful early English period, there another keeps careful custody of a rural temple which dates back to Norman times.

Nor is it greatly different with the home dwellings of the Fen folk. Those who builded for these peaceful people built for the centuries. Generation after generation has known no other home than such as greet the wayfarer wherever he wanders. Something, too, of the quiet, confident stability of this unique countryside is suggested by the sturdy, centuries-old bridges which span the frequent rivers. These waterways also are a reflex of the lives spent by

Digitized by Google

their reed-fringed banks. Under the summer sky, in the radiance of moon or starlight, and in the briefer gleam and longer gloom of winter days, their flowing to the sea is ever "without haste, without rest."

Digitized by Google

XV

WITNEY AND MINSTER LOVEL

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WITNEY AND MINSTER LOVEL

ALTHOUGH, as the crow flies, but ten miles distant from Oxford — that city which, "steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age," attracts unnumbered thousands within her gates every year — few indeed are the visitors from the outside world who disturb the repose of Witney. Yet for historic interest and placid pastoral scenery few districts in the county can hope to compete with this little town and its surroundings.

Excitement must not be sought here, nor any "sights" save such as yield their spell only to the reflective eye. Over church, and market-place, and the ancient houses which line the spacious main street of the town, seems to brood the peace of a far-off age. Life is not altogether idle here, for human hands are yet active plying an industry of remote antiquity; but that pursuit of the practical is powerless to

Digitized by Google

disturb the all-pervading calm. Man and nature seem attuned to the solemnity of the silent church spire uplifted to the unresponsive heavens, or to the murmurless flowing of the river Windrush as it wends its noiseless way to the Isis and the sea. Here,

> "but careless Quiet lies
> Wrapt in eternal silence far from enemies."

For untold centuries life has changed but little at Witney. "Could we for a moment raise the veil," writes a careful county historian, "we should probably find that the county life of 400 A. D. in Oxfordshire was not very dissimilar to that of to-day." The advent of the power of Rome and its departure, the raids of Jutes and Engles and Saxons, and even the coming of the Normans had only peaceful issues in this retired neighbourhood. Had Witney been a considerable city there would have been another story to tell; for the Saxons, hating city life and all that belonged to it, had then wrecked their vengeance on the place. But its rural peace could not fail to recommend the little settlement to those lovers of village life. That it found favour in their eyes seems proved by the Saxon name of the town, which

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

[illegible] calm. Man an[illegible] [illegible] to the solemnity of th[illegible] [illegible] uplifted to the unresponsive [illegible] murmurless flowing of th[illegible] [illegible] as it wends its noiseless wa[illegible] [illegible] the sea. Here,

> "but careless Quiet lies
> [illegible] in eternal silence far from enemies."

[illegible] untold centuries life has changed bu[illegible] [illegible] at Witney. "Could we for a moment [illegible] the veil," writes a careful county historian, [illegible] should probably find that the county life [illegible] Oxfordshire was not very dis[illegible] [illegible] of to-day." The advent of the [illegible] and its departure, the raids of [illegible] Angles and Saxons, and even the [illegible] the Normans had only peaceful [illegible] this retired neighbourhood. Had Witney been a considerable city there would have been another story to tell; for the Saxons, hating city life [illegible] all that belonged to it, had then wreck[illegible] their vengeance on the place. But its [illegible] peace [illegible] not fail to recommend the lit[illegible] settlement to those lovers of village [illegible] that it found favour in their eyes seems [illegible] by the Saxon name of the town, which

Digitized by Google

MINSTER LOVEL FROM THE MEADOWS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

enshrines as in a fossil the record that this was Witan-eye, or the "Parliament Isle."

An old proverb declares that Witney is famous for the four B's — Beauty, Bread, Beer and Blankets. Perhaps that accounts for its self-contained history. The community which possesses a liberal supply of those commodities can afford to be independent of the outside world.

To affirm that to-day the town maintains its supremacy in all the four B's might be a hazardous undertaking, but there can be no danger in declaring that so far as blankets are concerned its proud position is unassailed. Notwithstanding the competition of modern times, and the notable improvements which have been made in manufacturing processes, Witney blankets are still famous throughout the world as the finest of their kind. Nor is that a surprising fact. Considering that the natives of this town have been engaged in the occupation for unnumbered centuries, that generation has handed down to generation ever ripening experience, it would have been strange indeed if the craft had not here attained its greatest perfection.

Two explanations are offered for the location

Digitized by Google

of the blanket-weaving industry at Witney. One of these has to be placed to the credit of the river Windrush, which flows so peacefully through the town. According to an ancient authority, the superiority of Witney blankets is due to the waters of the river being rich in nitrous, "peculiar abstersive qualities." Whether chemical analysis confirms that theory is not on record. In fact a curious enquirer asserts that if "you ask any of the Witney manufacturers if this be really the reason the manufacture has remained there so long, you will not be successful in getting a straightforward answer to a straightforward question — merely an amused look, with which you will have to be content." But why destroy all our pleasant illusions? If it could be proved that the Windrush is not responsible for Witney blankets doubts would begin to arise whether the Trent is really responsible for the virtues of Burton ale.

Even, however, though the Windrush be robbed of its glory, there is another stubborn fact to be met. Without doubt Witney is situated in the heart of a great wool-growing district. It stands in close contact with the Cotswold country, which has always been famous for its luscious pasturage and its rare breed of sheep.

Digitized by Google

Whatever the original cause, the natives of Witney have been blanket-weavers for untold generations. The exact date of the founding

WITNEY BLANKET HALL

of the industry has been lost beyond recovery, but there are countless proofs that by the middle of the seventeenth century it was in a flourishing condition. William J. Monk, in his

Digitized by Google

contribution to the " Memorials of Old Oxfordshire," writes: " Henry III, when a boy staying at Witney Palace with Peter de Roches, had some of his wardrobe replenished here, as an entry in the Close Rolls shows, and it would be easy to prove that other sovereigns visited it upon many occasions, and it may be for the same purpose. Here came James II in the midst of his troubles, and perhaps the inhabitants endeavoured to solace him in his woes; at any rate, they do not appear to have been unmindful of the respect which was due to him as the sovereign of these realms, since they presented him with ' a pair of blankets with golden fringe.' In later days came George III with his little German spouse, and they, too, were given a pair of specially made blankets."

But, though prosperous, the blanket-weavers of Witney were not without their troubles. During the reign of Charles I some court favourite appears to have obtained a Patent, otherwise a tax, on the Witney blankets, and pressed his advantage so closely as to have made necessary an appeal to the House of Lords for redress. Half a century after that extortion had been removed, the weavers found their craft endangered by interlopers and " frauds

Digitized by Google

and abuses" introduced in "the deceitful working up of blankets." Those old weavers held a high opinion of their craft; it was, to their thinking, an "art and mystery," the latter word perhaps conveying their appreciation of the occult "abstersive" properties of the Windrush. Any way, they grew anxious to protect their industry, and, after the manner of early eighteenth century political economy, they arrived at the conclusion that a close corporation would serve their purpose best.

Hence the appeal of the Witney weavers to Queen Anne for Letters Patent giving them the power of incorporation, an appeal which reached a successful conclusion in 1710. This adroit move had an architectural result which is still in evidence in the town. Needing a building in which to exercise their powers, the incorporated weavers erected the Blanket Hall, a structure which, though no longer devoted to its original use, yet bears mute testimony to an early experiment in protection. High up on the front of the building, beneath the clock, the arms of the company are still in evidence, which include three leopards' heads, each having a shuttle in its mouth. The motto of the corporation was: "Weave truth with trust," a

Digitized by Google

sentiment which a local poet, penning an "Ode to Peace" in 1748, devoted to the muse in the following lines:

> "Industry to Temp'rance marry,
> That we may WEAVE TRUTH WITH TRUST;
> Hence let none our fleeces carry,
> But be to their country just."

No sooner had the weavers of Witney received authority from the crown than they promptly proceeded to use it. One of the earliest entries in the records of the meetings held in the Blanket Hall tells how a member was fined five shillings for giving his daughter work at one of his looms while at the same time refusing employment to a journeyman who had demanded it; and a year or two later another member was mulct in ten pounds for presuming to take a second apprentice into his employment. One of these entries would seem to suggest that the Witney weavers were not of a martial disposition. In 1745, the date of the first Jacobite rising, the corporation was required by the government to supply thirty men for service against the rebels. A meeting was hurriedly called in the Blanket Hall to debate on the order, and careful consideration of the royal mandate revealed

Digitized by Google

the fact that one guinea in "ready money" would be regarded as an acceptable substitute for each man. The Witney weavers sent thirty guineas!

Another Witney survival of the past is the

THE BUTTER CROSS AT WITNEY

picturesque Butter Cross, standing in the market-place. This structure owes its existence to William Blake, a native of the adjacent village of Coggs, who caused it to be erected in 1683. At that time, and for many generations, it was probably used as a kind of *pro bono publico* stall for the venders of butter on market-days, but now it seems to be the recognized loafing-place of the town. It seems to be more than

Digitized by Google

likely that the Butter Cross was erected for utilitarian ends on a site which had previously played its part in the religious life of Witney. Prior to the Commonwealth, most of the towns of England had their market-cross, consisting generally of a statue of the Virgin and the infant Christ, and it is quite feasible that Witney was no exception to the rule. When this was swept away by the austere Puritans, what was more likely than that its place should be occupied by a structure which would offer no chance to offend their irritable religious susceptibilities?

Less than three miles from Witney are two centres of interest which no visitor to the town should overlook. One of these is the derelict colony of Charterville, disfiguring the pleasant Oxfordshire landscape with another of those monuments to folly which socialistic experiments have scattered over the land. It had its origin in the Chartist movement of sixty years ago, and was one of the five estates purchased by Feargus O'Connor. This particular estate, comprising some three hundred acres, was split up into plots of two, three and four acres, on each of which a small three-roomed cottage was built. As soon as any subscriber to the general fund had paid in a total of five pounds,

Digitized by Google

he was eligible to take part in the ballot, and if he drew a prize he entered at once on the possession of his cottage and land. And every care was taken to give him a fair start on his rural career. The land was ploughed ready for sowing, and a sum varying from twenty to thirty pounds placed in the hands of each settler. But the scheme was a dismal failure. At Charterville the dumpy little cottages, set down just so in the midst of their plots, may still be seen; and conspicuous among them is the large building which was to serve as school and general meeting-house for the colonists. The schoolhouse is a barn and tenement; the cottages have become the homes of agricultural labourers. Many of the first owners remained but a week or two; the charms of rural life quickly palled, and they returned to their towns with the balance of their capital plus the goodly sum realized for the scrip which gave them legal right to cottage and land. For such, no doubt, the scheme was not a failure, but in the mass it was overtaken with that fate which appears to be the inevitable lot of all idealistic communities.

Only a few minutes' walk distant is a picturesque nook which quickly obliterates all memory

Digitized by Google

of the ugliness of Charterville. At the bottom of a gentle valley, embowered among trees, set in the emerald of deep-bladed grass and reduplicated in the clear waters of a placid stream, nestle the priory farm, the church, and the ruined manor-house of Minster Lovel. Once more the peace of the ancient world asserts its soothing influence, and the spirit becomes receptive to the legends of old romance.

Eight centuries have come and gone since the Lovel family reared its first roof tree in this enchanting dell. So long ago as 1200 a lady of that race, Maud by name, founded a priory close by, whence the hamlet became known as *Minster* Lovel. It was dissolved in 1415, and fifteen years later William, Lord Lovel, had built the stately manor-house which is now crumbling to decay within a stone's throw of his tomb.

Many a noble family in England shared in the disaster which overtook the last of the Plantagenets on the field of Bosworth, conspicuous among them being that Francis, Viscount Lovel who was lord of this dismantled mansion. He, it will be remembered, figures among the *dramatis personæ* of Shakespeare's "Richard III," but if he had taken no more prominent share in the adventures of that

Digitized by Google

monarch than the dramatist credits him with his fate would hardly have been so tragic and mysterious as it proved. Shakespeare, however, did not know what is known to-day. Evidently he was unaware that Francis Lovel was the youthful companion of Richard, that he bore the civil sword of Justice at his coronation, that he was created Lord Chamberlain, and that he is inscribed on royal records as the King's "dearest friend."

He was among the few loyal and devoted knights who galloped with Richard in his final and fatal desperate charge at Bosworth, and for two years thereafter he approved his unshaken devotion by heading little bands of heroic insurgents against Henry VII. For his reward he was placed high in the list of noble persons attainted for their adherence to Richard, and that document records that he was "slain at Stoke."

But was Francis Lovel slain at Stoke? It is the impossibility of answering that question which gives the ruins of Minster Lovel their most romantic association. That at the battle of Stoke, in 1487, Francis Lovel fought with as much valour as though Richard himself were present, is attested by Francis Bacon in his

Digitized by Google

"History of King Henry VII." But he adds that eventually Lord Lovel fled, "and swam over the Trent on horseback, but could not recover the other side, by reason of the steepness of the bank, and so was drowned in the river."

Yet legend, and more than legend, will have it that Francis Lovel regained his stately home by the side of the Windrush. Bacon himself knew of another report, which left him not drowned in the waters of the Trent, "but that he lived long after in a cave or vault." The fuller story tells that when he reached Minster Lovel once more he shut himself up in a vaulted chamber, confided his secret to but one faithful servant, to whom he entrusted the key of his hiding-place and the duty of bringing him food from time to time. Well was the secret kept, and faithfully the duty discharged, till there came a day when death suddenly overtook the devoted retainer. And day followed day, and night succeeded night, and no food any more reached the lord of Minster Lovel.

Generations later, in 1708, the Duke of Rutland was at Minster Lovel when some structural alterations were being made in the manor house. In the course of their excavations, the workmen laid bare a large underground vault, in which

Digitized by Google

MINSTER LOVEL.

LORD LOVEL'S TOMB.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

they found the skeleton of a man, reclining as though seated at a table, with book, paper, and pens before him.

With such a memory freshly renewed, the visitor can hardly fail to enter the nearby church in heightened mood. And in that peaceful little building, an exquisite example of the Perpendicular style of architecture, he will find a tomb of unusual beauty. This is not the resting-place, as is sometimes stated, of Francis Lovel, but of his ancestor, William, Lord Lovel. There is no inscription on the monument and the hand of time has so effaced the coats of arms that their heraldic secrets are as hidden as the fate of Francis Lovel; but for delicate workmanship, and for rich suggestion of the age of chivalry this alabaster memorial is a priceless survival. Far distant, and voiceless here, are the clamours of the modern world; with his sword for ever at rest, and hands folded in eternal supplication, this knightly figure shall know no reawakening to those intrigues of the court and those conflicts of battle which have left their shadows on the tottering walls of Minster Lovel.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

XVI

THREE MEMORABLE PULPITS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THREE MEMORABLE PULPITS

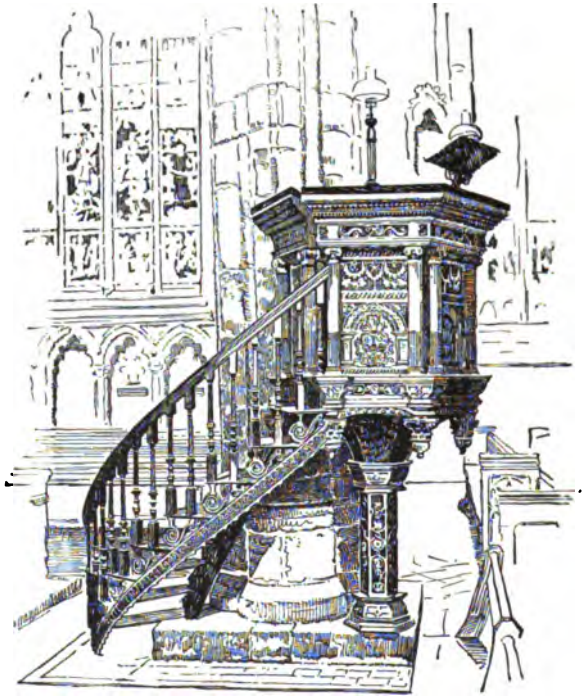
THAN the three men who once spoke their message from these three pulpits it would be difficult to name a trio having so little in common. John Cotton was not farther removed from Thomas Arnold than he, in turn, was from Henry Edward Manning. Yet each of the three was included under the elastic designation of a minister of the Church of England.

Than these three pulpits, too, it would be impossible to cite an equal number so typical of the history of the church to which they belong. As surely as the rostrum of John Cotton is representative of Puritanism, and that of Thomas Arnold eloquent of a liberal theology, so is the pulpit of Henry Edward Manning reminiscent of the high-church half-way-house to Rome. If the ecclesiastical historian should ever require visible symbols of the three main streams of opinion in the Church of England, and, subsequently, in the religious life of America, he

Digitized by Google

could not wish for more felicitous or appropriate illustrations than these three pulpits.

Both chronologically and from the standpoint



JOHN COTTON'S PULPIT

of most constant use, the pulpit of John Cotton has undoubted claims to priority. As the picture will show, it is still so fresh in appearance that it is difficult to credit nearly three

Digitized by Google

centuries have passed away since it was placed in the position it still occupies in the parish church of Old Boston. This is not the pulpit from which John Cotton delivered his earliest sermons to the Boston people. His election as vicar took place in 1612, and for eight years he continued to use an old rostrum of which all traces have been lost. In 1620, however, he was provided with this new platform, which, in its hexagonal shape and general scheme of decoration, is a fine example of Jacobean work. Some of the carving is of an earlier date, belonging, as it does, to the time of Queen Elizabeth. The dark oak is skilfully relieved with decorations in gold, and it will be noticed that the panels are entirely innocent of those symbolical letters or designs so frequently seen on modern pulpits. The treads of the staircase appear to be modern, but otherwise the rostrum is unchanged from that far-off generation when, for some thirteen years, it was constantly occupied by the person of John Cotton.

Few pulpits, in that or any other age, can have had such hard wear as this. The modern custom which leaves the pulpit unoccupied and silent for a hundred and sixty-five hours in each week would have been repugnant to the nature of the

Digitized by Google

unwearied John Cotton. In the nature of things, he was found in his rostrum twice every Sunday, his appearances on those occasions not being limited to the stinted hour-and-a-half of modern times, but extending over five solid hours. In addition to those two lengthy services on Sunday, he regularly preached four times in each week, and also indulged in "occasional" services at which he would consume six hours in prayer and exhortation! A note-taker who was present at one of these protracted services observed that "there were as many sleepers as wakers, scarce any man but sometimes forced to wink or nod." Verily, the Puritan divines were aptly named "painful preachers," and it may not be unreasonable to charge to their account something of that "length of face and general atrabilious look" which Lowell detected in the portraits of men of their times.

Notwithstanding the prominent part he played in the early life of New England, it may be questioned whether the pulpit of John Cotton possesses a tithe of the human interest which still attaches to the simple rostrum of Thomas Arnold. Partly, no doubt, this may be due to the fact that John Cotton failed to find such a sympathetic biographer as fell to the lot of

Digitized by Google

Thomas Arnold; but a more potent cause may be found in the reflection that while Cotton's theology is of the dead past that of Arnold is not far removed from the living faith of the present.

What an immense debt the world owes to the Rugby of Thomas Arnold has not been, and perhaps cannot be, fully tabulated. It may be possible to appraise to some extent the measure of his influence acting through the life-work of such men as Arthur Stanley, Thomas Hughes, Arthur Clough, and his own illustrious son, Matthew Arnold; but the hundreds of scholars who, without achieving fame, carried the elevating influence of their great schoolmaster into diverse walks of life represent an indebtedness of which history can at the best take only imperfect account.

By the unanimous testimony of his pupils, it was from the pulpit of the school chapel at Rugby that Arnold exercised most potently both his genius as a scholar and his exalted character as a Christian teacher. Before his day, the head-masters of public schools in England had not made a practice of preaching regularly to their scholars; it was only on special occasions that the boys had a discourse addressed to them;

Digitized by Google

but Arnold's habit of delivering a sermon every Sunday afternoon is now universally followed. As with other innovations at Rugby, he felt his way slowly. At first, he limited his addresses to about five minutes; but during the last fourteen years of his life his exhortations took the form of a set sermon of some twenty minutes' duration, and the discourses so delivered are still regarded as the best models of that type of preaching.

No boy left Rugby without retaining an indelible memory of the Sunday services in the school chapel. One pupil, who preserved throughout his life a living recollection of Arnold the preacher, has recorded that to the lads who heard him the impression of the man counted for far more than his words. "He was not the preacher or the clergyman who had left behind him all his usual thoughts and occupations as soon as he had ascended the pulpit. He was still the scholar, the historian, and theologian, basing all that he said, not indeed ostensibly, but consciously, and often visibly, on the deepest principles of the past and present. He was still the instructor and the schoolmaster, only teaching and educating with increased solemnity and energy. He was still the simple-

Digitized by Google

CARDINAL MANNING'S PULPIT.

DR. ARNOLD'S PULPIT IN RUGBY CHAPEL.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

hearted and earnest man, labouring to win others to share in his own personal feelings of disgust at sin, and love of goodness, and to trust to the same faith, in which he hoped to live and die himself." The same witness tells how the lapse of years failed to dim the picture of that band of eager youths who, Sunday after Sunday, "sat beneath that pulpit, with their eyes fixed on him, and their attention strained to the uttermost to catch every word he uttered;" and another records concerning Arnold's sermons how he used to "listen to them from first to last with a kind of awe," and was often so impressed that on coming out of the chapel he would avoid his friends in order that he might slink home to be alone with his thoughts.

A brief extract from one of those memorable sermons — the last Arnold gave — will, even though robbed of the preacher's living accents, reveal something of the lofty spirit of the speaker. It was on an early Sunday afternoon in June that he took his place in his pulpit for the last time. The school was on the eve of vacation, and he who had been for so many notable years its fearless guide and head was moved to utter these farewell words: "The real point which concerns us all, is not whether our sin be of one

Digitized by Google

kind or of another, more or less venial, or more or less mischievous in man's judgment, and to our worldly interests; but whether we struggle against all sin because it is sin; whether we have or have not placed ourselves consciously under the banner of our Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in Him, cleaving to Him, feeding on Him by faith daily, and so resolved, and continually renewing our resolution, to be His faithful soldiers and servants to our lives' end. To this I would call you all, so long as I am permitted to speak to you — to this I do call you all, and especially all who are likely to meet here again after a short interval, that you may return Christ's servants with a believing and loving heart; and, if this be so, I care little as to what particular form temptations from without may take; there will be a security within — a security not of man, but of God."

Within the walls which so often echoed to his earnest voice, and under the shadow of that pulpit from whence he impressed his noble character on so many youthful spirits, the body of Thomas Arnold was laid to its rest. And now, for the sake of that rare spirit, and because of the exalted elegy to his memory penned by his own son, Rugby Chapel possesses associations

Digitized by Google

such as few sacred buildings can claim. Surely none who muse within its silent walls can miss the lesson of the poet-son of the great schoolmaster:

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,
Prompt, unwearied, as here.
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad;
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest. This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

. . . . . .

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honoured and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor

Digitized by Google

Is the race of men whom I see —
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.

Wholly different is the interest attaching to the pulpit from which Henry Edward Manning exercised his ministry before he went over to the Church of Rome. It is to be found in the picturesque little church of Lavington, in the English county of Sussex, beneath the shadow of which Richard Cobden is buried. When Manning was appointed to this rural living, the church was in a neglected condition, and the present structure, as well as the pews, furniture and pulpit, were designed and erected under his supervision.

Two critical phases in the career of the future cardinal are associated with Lavington Church. Under its roof he went through a ceremony which, if it had been lasting in its results, would have effectually prevented him from having been even a humble priest in the Roman Church. In the closing decade of his life, when he had nursed for many years his unaccountable hostility to Newman, one of Manning's supporters had declared, "Newman's conversion is the greatest calamity which has befallen the Catholic Church in our day." To this aspersion a friend

Digitized by Google

of Newman retorted, "No, the greatest calamity to the Church in our day was the death of a woman." Of course this rejoinder was aimed at Manning, who, in his early manhood, had taken a wife to himself at the altar beside his pulpit in Lavington Church. That Manning resented the remark may be inferred from the fact that when he charged its supposed author with the utterance, he only replied, "I pity the man who repeated it to your Grace."

Less than four years after the marriage, Manning's wife died, and thenceforward, but especially after he became a Catholic, he carefully obliterated all traces of that episode from his life. References in his diary were all expunged; letters belonging to that period were wholly destroyed; an unfinished portrait for which Mrs. Manning had given but one sitting mysteriously disappeared; and when, after he became a cardinal, the churchwardens of Lavington wrote to inform him that his wife's grave was falling into decay, his reply was: "It is best so; let it be. Time effaces all things." Manning never alluded to his wife after he went over to Rome. His candid biographer thinks the reason may have been that he was afraid the knowledge that he had once been married might have

Digitized by Google

lessened the respect of his Catholic flock; but, whatever the cause, the fact was so thoroughly obliterated that when he died few Catholics or members of the general public knew that the cardinal had once been a husband.

Apart from this episode, however, the chief interest in the pulpit of Lavington Church consists in the fact that it was from its vantage ground Manning preached his last sermon as a minister of the Church of England. During the last two or three of the seventeen years he ministered here his mind was greatly perplexed as to what path he ought to follow. At last, as the year 1850 waned to its close, he felt that he could not any longer retain his position in the English church. "I feel," he wrote, "that my foot is in the river. It is cold, and my heart is sad." A little later he told the same friend that he was "suffering deeply," adding, "I have not much to say about our dear home and flock. They are very sorry, and speak very kindly. What tender affections, and visions of beauty and of peace move to and fro under that hillside where I see it rise in memory. Nothing in all this life, except the Altar, can ever again be to me as Lavington." Perhaps, even after he became the famous cardinal, and moved at his

Digitized by Google

ease among the great men who controlled the public affairs of his time, Manning, in his innermost heart, often thought of that humble pulpit in Lavington Church, and wished that the crumbling grave in that village God's-acre had not so untimely claimed its beautiful victim.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

XVII

FIVE FAMOUS SCHOOLS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FIVE FAMOUS SCHOOLS

SECOND in interest only to the houses in which they were born into life, are the buildings in which men of genius were born into the realm of knowledge. It is true these intellectual birthplaces prompt a reflection not wholly pleasing to those who have the cause of education at heart; for they suggest the thought that while the average boy reaps undoubted benefit from a thorough course of instruction, the boy of genius is by no means equally indebted to his formal tuition in school.

Here and there a schoolmaster to whom fortune has committed the early education of a famous man has been known to hint that his pupil's greatness was not unconnected with his teacher's surpassing ability;

> "The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,
> Claims more than half the praise as his due share;"

and there are schools which sun themselves over-consciously in the reflected glory of those

Digitized by Google

who were once numbered among their scholars. But really, when genius is in question, school or master counts for little. How preposterous it would have been had Shakespeare's achievements been placed to the special credit of the grammar-school of Stratford-on-Avon! The undue praise of any specific educational establishment inevitably recalls Lamb's witticism at the expense of the gentleman who thought all men of genius were manufactured at Harrow school. There was so-and-so, he said, and so-and-so, and thus on through a long string of names, following up each with the remark, "and he was a Harrow boy." "Yes," stuttered Lamb, "Ye-es; and there's Burns, he was a *plough* boy."

Still, even the boy of genius must learn to use his tools. "You come here not to read," Arnold used to say to his Rugby boys, "but to learn how to read." And then there is that saying of Goethe: "Even the greatest genius would not go far if he tried to owe everything to his own internal self." So that, even although school does not count for so much with the boy of genius as with his comrade of ordinary talent, it counts for enough to impart considerable interest to the building in which his feet were set upon the highway of knowledge.

Digitized by Google

Though time has wrought sad havoc with the schools of many famous men, levelling some to the ground and so changing others as to leave them unrecognizable, it yet has spared a few of those the world would be most reluctant to lose. Chief among such buildings is the picturesque structure where the boy William Shakespeare was once a scholar. Among the various edifices in Stratford-on-Avon associated with his immortal memory there is not one which has undergone so little change as the Edward the Sixth Grammar-School. Indeed, this is the one building upon which we may gaze with certain knowledge that the impression it makes on a modern retina differs but slightly from the image which the boy Shakespeare knew. The house shown as his birthplace is undoubtedly a fraud; the house he built for himself has long ago wholly disappeared; but this school building is an authentic relic of the bard's early days.

In this quaint, half-timbered structure, then, somewhere about the year 1571, William Shakespeare, then a lad of seven, began the only academical training he was ever to receive. No anecdotes have survived from his school-days; and all that can be affirmed about the education he was given here is that it included instruction

Digitized by Google

in the language and literature of ancient Rome. In some grammar-schools of the period the elements of Greek were also taught, and if that rule prevailed at Stratford we need look no further for that "less Greek" which Jonson placed to Shakespeare's credit. Whether the future dramatist was an industrious scholar, or whether he himself was the

> "whining school-boy, with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school,"

must be left an open question. But no one can gaze on these walls, so reminiscent of his childhood, without recalling Longfellow's poetic picture of the world's most famous school-boy

> "I see him now
> A boy with sunshine on his brow,
> And hear in Stratford's quiet street
> The patter of his little feet."

Brain for brain, would there have been much difference between the cerebrum of Shakespeare and that of Isaac Newton? The whole universe is Newton's monument, said one eulogist; the sun of Newton has absorbed the radiance of all other luminaries, declared a second; and Emerson offers the greatest tribute of all in his preg-

Digitized by Google

SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOOL.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON'S SCHOOL.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

nant sentence: "One may say that a gravitating solar system is already prophesied in the nature of Newton's mind."

Happily, while it is not known with certainty which were the rooms he occupied at Cambridge University, no doubt exists as to the building in which the boy Newton received his earliest training. Six miles from the ancient Lincolnshire manor house in which the future mathematician was born, is the market town of Grantham, in the public school of which Newton became a pupil. Two and a half centuries have passed away since then, but the school-house remains unaltered. On the opposite side of the road runs the wall of Grantham churchyard, the identical wall against which the young philosopher completed his fisticuff triumph over a more robust fellow scholar. The quarrel began when the two boys were on their way to school one morning, Newton's companion opening hostilities by kicking him in the stomach. When lessons were over, the kicker found himself challenged to a fight in the adjoining churchyard, and so skilfully did his opponent handle his fists that it was not long ere he owned himself beaten. The only witness of the combat was the schoolmaster's son, who assured Newton

Digitized by Google

that his victory would not be complete until he rubbed his opponent's nose against the wall. Thereupon, thorough in all he undertook, even as a boy, Newton seized his assailant by the ears and duly ground his face against the wall.

But Newton was not satisfied with that victory. His vanquished foe stood above him in the school, and it now dawned upon him that it would be more to his credit to strive after mental supremacy. Previously he had been an idle scholar, more absorbed in working out countless mechanical inventions than in his books; but from the day of his victorious fight he addressed himself to his studies with such determination that it was not long before he rose to the highest place in the academy. When the day came for him to bid farewell to Grantham, his master made him stand in the most conspicuous place in the school, while, with tears in his eyes, he eulogized his favourite pupil, and held him up to the other scholars as one worthy their love and emulation.

Few men of genius have owed so little to schools and schoolmasters as Alexander Pope. So far as set instruction was concerned, his education was ended when he had reached his twelfth year. For the bulk of that knowledge which he used with such striking effect, he was in-

Digitized by Google

debted almost entirely to his own exertions; "considering," he said, "how very little I had, when I came from school, I think I may be said to have taught myself Latin as well as French and Greek." Wordsworth has left it on record that his earliest days at school were supremely happy just because he was allowed to read what he liked; and Pope derived equal pleasure from the fact that his freedom from the restraint of school gave him liberty to browse among books at his will, "like a boy gathering flowers in the fields and woods, just as they fall in his way."

Of the two buildings in which Pope received his earliest instruction, only one remains. It is situated in the Hampshire village of Twyford, not far from that Twyford House where Benjamin Franklin was so often the guest of his friend Bishop Shipley, and under the roof of which he wrote a considerable portion of his Autobiography. Pope was in his eighth year when he was sent to this lovely hamlet, but his genius was of such early growth that he had already translated part of Statius, and had made some attempts at poetry on his own account. Hardly had he been a year at school when some personal traits of his master appealed

Digitized by Google

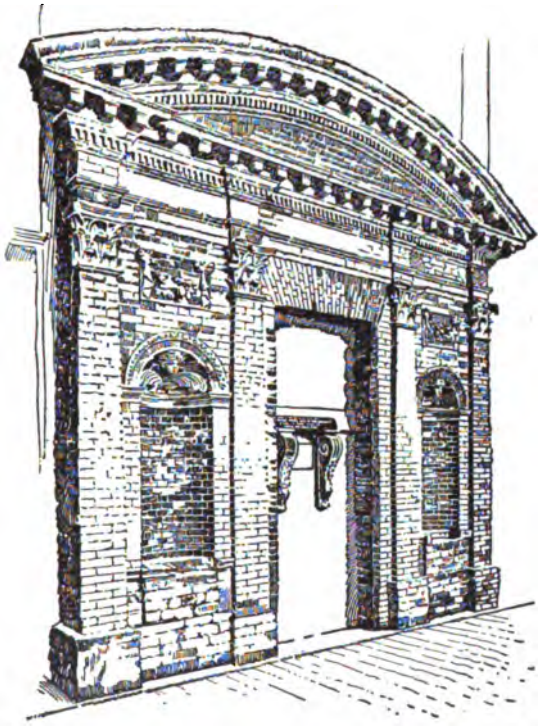
to his satiric faculty, and he forthwith perpetuated his ideas in verse. The poem was seen by the master, who promptly rewarded the young poet with a rejoinder more tangible than words. Resenting bodily punishment for his child, Pope's father immediately removed him from the school, and Twyford knew him no more.

But his year's sojourn in that beautiful village left its mark on his verse. Ere he entered his teens he had written his haunting "Ode on Solitude," and there can be no question that its pictures of the peaceful happiness of a retired rural life owe their existence to his Twyford days. His school-house here has been transformed into several tenements, but the alterations have so little affected the appearance of the building that it is not difficult to imagine what its aspect must have been when Pope dwelt under its roof.

Fragmentariness seems naturally associated with the name of John Keats. His greatest poem was left unfinished; his most exquisite ode is a torso; than his, no life could be more truthfully symbolized by a broken pillar. In strange keeping with all this, is the fact that of his school-house nothing save a mere fragment survives. Even that fragment owes its pres-

Digitized by Google

ervation not to its having been a portion of the building in which the poet was educated, but



FAÇADE OF KEATS' SCHOOLHOUSE

to the accident that it was an excellent example of early Georgian brick-work! The house at Enfield of which it formed a part was built for a rich West-India merchant, and when it was

Digitized by Google

demolished to make room for a railway-station the façade was carefully preserved for the sake of its fine brick-work and rich ornaments. Hence its appearance in the South Kensington Museum, where, however, no record is made of the fact that the boy Keats often passed through this doorway in his school-days.

During the six years he spent at this, his only school, the future poet gave at first no indication of that passion for literature by which he was afterwards distinguished. Books had no attraction for him; what he lived for was fighting; he would fight any one at any time, morning, noon, or night; "it was meat and drink to him." Even his brothers were not exempt from his pugnacious exploits; "before we left school," said George Keats, "we quarrelled often and fought fiercely;" but if any one else attacked either of his brothers, John Keats flew to his aid. One day an usher boxed the ears of Tom Keats, and in an instant John rushed from his place in the school and faced the usher in a fighting attitude. Naturally, this reckless courage made him the favourite of the school, but even apart from that trait of his character he won the love of all his companions.

Digitized by Google

Suddenly, when his terms were drawing to a close, Keats, like Newton, dropped the character of the pugilist for that of the scholar, and he became so absorbed in his reading that he was never without a book in his hand. Even at supper, he would prop up a portly folio between himself and the table, " eating his meal from beyond it."

In harmony with the lowly social station of life into which he was born, none of these interesting school-houses has so humble an appearance as that in which Thomas Carlyle began his education. He was only five years old when he was enrolled among the pupils of " Tom Donaldson's " school in his native village of Ecclefechan, the master being, according to his famous scholar, " a severely-correct kind of man." But he qualified that opinion by recalling that his master was always " merry and kind " to him, and only severe to the " undeserving." Tom Donaldson must have been a capable teacher, for by the time Carlyle had reached his seventh year he was reported to be " complete in English."

Two other buildings were to claim some share in the honour of training the great writer, the grammar-school at Annan and Edinburgh Uni-

Digitized by Google

versity; but as he denied receiving much good from either, the lowly school-house of Ecclefechan may be regarded as the most important factor in Carlyle's education. It is not now used for scholastic purposes, but those pilgrims from America who visit that Scottish village in such large numbers every year look upon this modest building with almost as much interest as that other little house in which Carlyle was born. Behind the school-house is the simple village graveyard where the friend of Emerson and the author of " Sartor " sleeps with his lowly kindred.

Digitized by Google

XVIII

WATER WORSHIP IN DERBYSHIRE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WATER WORSHIP IN DERBYSHIRE

MANY who cast their thoughts back to the condition of mankind when the world was young must often sigh for a temporary draught of the waters of Lethe. To be able to confront nature after the manner of primitive man would be an intensely interesting experiment; to erase from recollection the rich "spoils of time;" to have a mind blank of all the multifarious knowledge industriously compiled through the long ages of civilization.

What would be the result of such an experience? Perhaps here and there among the readers of these lines there may be an occasional one able to frame a half-answer to the question: one who, early in life, when the brain was not so fully stored as in after years, has had moments of absolute aloneness with nature, and been startled with the realization of an objective presence which oppressed the spirit. Such an event happened in the mental history of Wordsworth. As F. W. H. Myers has pointed out

Digitized by Google

in his illuminating study of that poet, there is a passage in the "Prelude" in which "the boy's mind is represented as passing through precisely the train of emotion which we may imagine to be at the root of the theology of many barbarous people. He is rowing at night alone on Esthwaite Lake, his eyes fixed upon a ridge of crags, above which nothing is visible:

'I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And as I rose upon the stroke my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan; —
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again;
And growing still in stature, the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own,
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow-tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood. But after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness — call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,

Digitized by Google

Of sea, or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.' "

Perhaps in all modern poetry there is no other passage quite comparable to this for the illustration it affords of the manner in which the objects of nature " can impress the mind with that awe which is the foundation of savage creeds, while yet they are not identified with any human intelligence."

But, inasmuch as primitive man has not yet disappeared from the earth, the process can also be illustrated from the records of travel among untutored races. One observer tells us that on the river Niger, canoemen may often be seen bending over the water in converse with its spirit, and another states that the native boatmen continually bawl through trumpets to the river fetich, and that the echo to the call is interpreted as the spirit's reply. Among all the races who still represent the dawn in the history of civilization the various aspects of nature have their special deities. And conspicuous among these are the gods who preside over ocean, or river, or spring. " What ethnography has to teach," writes E. B. Tylor, " of that great

Digitized by Google

element of the religion of mankind, the worship of well and lake, brook and river, is simply this — that what is poetry to us was philosophy to early man; that to his mind water acted not by laws of force, but by life and will; that the water-spirits of primæval mythology are as souls which cause the water's rush and rest, its kindness and its cruelty; that, lastly, man finds in the beings which, with such power, can work him weal and woe, deities to be feared and loved, to be prayed to and praised, and propitiated with sacrificial gifts."

Such mingled feelings of fear and affection persisted in the high civilization attained by the Greeks and Romans. They, it will be recalled, always entered the bath with uncovered heads, and indulged universally in votive offerings by the side of springs and fountains. Horace declared it was because he was a friend to the springs and fountains that the Muses had protected his life at Philippi and rescued him on many other occasions; and the spirit of worship breaths through every line of his immortal ode to the fountain of Bandusia:

"O babbling Spring, than glass more clear,
Worthy of wreath and cup sincere,

Digitized by Google

To-morrow shall a kid be thine
With swelled and sprouting brows for sign, —
Sure sign! — of loves and battles near.

"Child of the race that butt and rear!
Not less, alas! his life blood dear
Must tinge thy cold wave crystalline,
O babbling Spring!

"Thee Sirius knows not. Thou dost cheer
With pleasant cool the plough-worn steer, —
The wandering flock. This verse of mine
Will rank thee one with founts divine;
Men shall thy rock and tree revere,
O babbling Spring!"

To the modern mind, as Mr. Tylor remarks, all this is poetry rather than philosophy. The reason is obvious. Reservoirs and water-rates are ruthless destroyers of sentiment. It is difficult to appreciate in the twentieth century that state of mind which created the water-worship of the long-ago. While the modern man is called upon to compound for his supply of water in hard cash, it is improbable that he will be caught again in that attitude of adoration which primitive man assumed in the presence of fountain or well.

Yet the cult is not dead, even among civilized people. There are two or three villages in England where, once a year, the water-spirits are

Digitized by Google

still honoured with something of that worship once so common throughout the world. This is specially the case at Tissington, a village situated in the famous Peak district of Derbyshire. Within the bounds of this parish, and at no great distance from each other, are five

TISSINGTON VILLAGE

distinct natural springs of water, or wells, as they are called; and every year, on Ascension Day, the entire population is earnestly absorbed in doing honour to those sources whence, free of all cost, the water-supply of the hamlet is derived.

Surely no one can gaze upon the simple ceremonies of Well-Dressing day at Tissington without realizing that custom is the most abiding and indestructible thing in this world of change. The Pyramids of Egypt are sometimes exalted

Digitized by Google

as among the most ancient monuments of antiquity, but the simple village folk who pay their devotions to the wells of Tissington every year represent an antiquity beside which that of the Pyramids is a mushroom growth. To the seeing eye, those well-dressers tell of an age and a faith dating back long prior to the dawn of history.

For several days preceding each anniversary, all the villagers are absorbed in preparations for the event. Naturally, the first matter which has to be considered is that of the designs of the various wells, and as there are five to be treated every year it argues considerable resourcefulness of ideas that these designs are varied with each anniversary. When the scheme of decoration for each well has been decided upon, the initial step in working it out consists in making a wooden frame on which to build up the design. As, however, the materials out of which each design is constructed consist of such diverse and miscellaneous articles as moss, evergreen leaves, haricot beans, minute shells, and the delicate petals of flowers, it might puzzle an inexperienced well-dresser to decide how best to prepare the wooden frame for the reception of such unusual pigments. At Tissington the problem has been solved by preparing a mixture

Digitized by Google

of wet clay, into which salt is kneaded for the purpose of keeping it moist and adhesive. When the wooden frame has been coated with this preparation to the thickness of about half an inch, the chosen design is slowly elaborated thereon with the materials noted above. As may be imagined, the process is a tedious one; and when, as at Tissington, there are five pictures to be prepared, the labour is not inconsiderable.

In some cases, as will be seen by reference to the photographs which show the designs of a recent year, the motto chosen provides the artist with the theme for his scheme of decoration. Thus, the design over the Yew-Tree Well is in harmony with its legend of "At thy feet adoring fall;" while the adornment of Hand's Well is in perfect unison with its scriptural quotation. The pair of harts owe their existence to haricot beans, as does also the suggested mountain-origin of the rather formal stream which runs between them. The other designs include creditable representations of a castle and a town-gate.

Sometimes the designs adopted seem somewhat foreign to the purpose of the well-dressers, as when a Chinese figure was chosen for a leading

Digitized by Google

topic; but in the main the designs usually have some distinct or symbolical meaning.

Indeed, so far as the ceremonies of the day are concerned, the entire proceedings are suggestive of that wise expediency with which in the early days of Christianity the Church took over and gave a new interpretation to customs which were wholly pagan in their origin. At Tissington, the well-dressing celebration begins with a service in the parish church, at which a suitable sermon is preached, and thereafter a procession is formed which visits each of the wells in turn. During a brief halt at each well, a portion of scripture is read, and a hymn sung to the accompaniment of the village band. Once these duties are discharged, the villagers give themselves over for the rest of the day to rural sports and holiday pastimes. The farmers, and others whose means permit, keep open house throughout the day, and even strangers are made heartily welcome to the good cheer provided for this yearly festival.

Two explanations have been offered to account for the persistence with which the villagers of Tissington celebrate Well-Dressing day. One theory affirms that the custom had its origin in a feeling of gratitude for the special providence

Digitized by Google

which, in a season of terrible drought, maintained undiminished the water-supply of these five wells; the other explanation would find a cause in the statement that when the Black Death of the fourteenth century swept over England and decimated whole villages, the people of Tissington owed their preservation to the purity of the water supplied by these wells. Such incidents may have accentuated the zeal of the villagers in their water-worship, but for the origin of that reverence we must undoubtedly look back to a time of which history takes no account. It has been shown that the worship of water was common to all the races of mankind in the earliest days of which legend gives us knowledge; and its unique survival in this Derbyshire village is an attractive illustration of the poetic fancy with which men looked upon their environment when all the world was young.

Digitized by Google

THE MANOR WELL.

THE TOWN WELL.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

XIX

WARKWORTH AND ITS HERMITAGE

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WARKWORTH AND ITS HERMITAGE

WITHIN sound of the North Sea and circled about by the reflecting waters of the river Coquet, stand the massive ruins of Warkworth Castle, offering to the informed imagination silent yet eloquent witness to many a stirring and picturesque page of English history.

Though lying but a mile or two distant from the east-coast steel-highway between England and Scotland, the tide of modern life has almost receded from this interesting spot. Now and then a tiny wave from the ocean of travel reaches out to these silent walls, but week in and week out through the procession of the seasons the ancient peace of Warkworth is practically unbroken.

How violent are the changes the centuries bring! To the Northumbrians of seven, or six, or five hundred years ago it would have seemed incredible that Warkworth should ever cease to be a centre of busy life. In those far-off

Digitized by Google

days this castle was a favourite stronghold of the illustrious house of Percy, whose sons, in the age of chivalry and succeeding generations, held a position of proud pre-eminence among the powerful nobles of England. In the veins of the Percies there mingled the blood royal of France and England. An early lord of Northumberland traced his ancestry back in direct line to Charlemagne; a later scion could claim kinship with Henry III of England. For long centuries the Percies were ever foremost in the council-chamber or on the battle-field, approving themselves, especially amid the clash of arms, born leaders of men. And the castle at Warkworth naturally gathered to itself much of the renown achieved by the lords of Northumberland.

But the history of Warkworth Castle began long before it became the home of the Percies. Its origins, indeed, are lost in the mists of a far distant past. Laborious antiquaries opine that the moated mound on which the donjon stands was originally occupied by the " worth " or palace of the Ocgings, a line of Bernician princes. These learned imaginings, however, provide little food even for the historic imagination. In default of actual information of earlier

Digitized by Google

GATEHOUSE ON WARKWORTH BRIDGE.

WARKWORTH CASTLE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

episodes it is more interesting to fasten upon the authenticated record of the visit of King John to Warkworth in February, 1213. More than two years had yet to elapse ere he adhibited his unwilling signature to Magna Charta, but his presence in Northumberland had intimate relation with the struggle which culminated at Runnymede. It was the strong-hearted leadership of the Northern barons which made the winning of the Great Charter possible, and John's presence at Warkworth was due to the sudden expedition he made for the purpose of crushing those fearless champions of liberty. Devastation and disorder marked the path in Northumberland of that king on whom the terrible verdict was passed, "Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John." The perfidious monarch paid marked attention to the estates of the Percy of that time, as though foreseeing that his name would take a foremost place on the list of those barons who were to compel his acceptance of Magna Charta.

Not yet, however, were the Percies lords of Warkworth Castle. But they had a stronghold near by, at Alnwick, against which, in the late years of the thirteenth and the early years of the fourteenth centuries, the tide of Scottish

Digitized by Google

invasion frequently broke in wild force. Those were the stirring generations of border warfare. Bannockburn did not end the feud between the northern and southern kingdoms. Again and again Robert Bruce invaded Northumberland. Several desperate attempts belong to the year 1327, culminating in the investment of Alnwick and Warkworth Castles by a considerable army under the personal leadership of the redoubtable Scottish king. But they all failed. And that result was largely due to the Percy who was so soon to number Warkworth among his personal possessions.

It happened thus. Grateful for the services he had rendered in hurling back the Scots, but more appreciative still of the part he played in securing the conviction and death of the scheming Mortimer, Edward III marked his favour to Percy by a grant of the castle and lordship of Warkworth in 1330. From that time to the present, with brief intermissions of forfeiture, it has remained among the possessions of the famous Northumberland house.

Nearly half a century later the head of the Percy family was created Earl of Northumberland by Richard II. That monarch could have had little premonition of the part the new earl

Digitized by Google

was to play in the rebellion which, twenty-two years later, was to end in his deposition. Why the earl took part in that movement is involved in obscurity, but there is no gainsaying the fact, nor that he played a conspicuous rôle in placing Henry Bolinbroke on the throne of England as Henry IV.

Four years later the Percies and Warkworth Castle figured prominently in English history. The loyalty of the earl to the new king was shortlived. Through family relationships they became implicated in the conspiracy for the dethronement of Henry IV, a conspiracy which was discussed and consummated within the walls of Warkworth. This is the theme Shakespeare seized upon for the first part of his "Henry IV," the leading characters of that drama including, it will be remembered, not only the Earl of Northumberland, but his still more famous son, the Percy Hotspur of ballad and history.

> "A son who is the theme of honour's tongue;
> Amongst a grove, the very straightest plant;
> Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride."

Even a king might have hesitated to take arms against such a sire and such a son. The earl and Hotspur were no novices in the arts of

Digitized by Google

war; the one was growing grey in the service of arms, the other had been bred to sword and spear and dauntless leadership from his tenderest years. And when the Percies took a venture in hand they bent to its accomplishment every gift of an adroit and high-spirited race. Warkworth Castle, as has been said, was the centre of this momentous conspiracy, and so skilfully and speciously was it planned that in a brief time Hotspur had letters in his possession committing nearly all the nobles of England to the support of his enterprise. At length the hour arrived for action, but ere riding off at the head of eight score horsemen, Hotspur placed the incriminating letters in the custody of his squire, who, in turn, hid them in some corner of Warkworth Castle.

Hotspur's enterprise against Henry IV cannot be followed here. It was the last of his desperate ventures. Many nobles flocked to his standard at Chester, and his father was to follow soon with such support as he had remained behind to gather in Northumberland. But the king, moving swiftly and with consummate generalship, threw his forces between Hotspur and his father, and by the battle of Shrewsbury freed himself from the danger which threatened his

Digitized by Google

throne. Hotspur himself fell on that stoutly-contested field:

> "fare thee well, great heart!
> Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk!
> When that this body did contain a spirit,
> A kingdom for it was too small a bound;
> But now two paces of the vilest earth
> Is room enough: this earth that bears thee dead
> Bears not alive so stout a gentleman."

News of the disaster and the death of his heroic son reached the Earl of Northumberland on his march. It was useless to proceed further, and so he retreated to his own country. At Newcastle he found closed gates and cold hearts, resolving him to seek refuge in his own castle at Warkworth. Here he received a summons to the presence of the king, a summons he could not afford to disobey. After a year or so of hollow truce, the earl, on being called to attend the council, excused himself on the score of age and infirmity. Those pleas were but the cloak for new insurrection, and when the king realized that fact he gathered an army of over thirty thousand men and marched swiftly to the north. The earl fled, but Warkworth barred the royal host for a time. Even to-day its stout walls look as though they might have made

Digitized by Google

formidable resistance to a fifteenth century army, but the king had equipped his force with "every conceivable engine of war, from the old-fashioned stone-casting catapults to the newly invented guns, one of the latter being so large that, it was believed, no wall could withstand the missiles it hurled." That appears to have been the opinion of the defenders of Warkworth. Perhaps they smiled confidently when they saw the royal cannons placed in position, but by the time seven rounds had been discharged such havoc had been wrought that the captain surrendered at discretion. The next day Henry IV was comfortably lodged within its walls penning a letter to the Privy Council in London announcing his success.

Royalty did not altogether desert Warkworth when the king returned to London. From this date, 1405, to about 1414, the noble castle on the Coquet was the headquarters of John of Lancaster, the third son of Henry IV. Although but a lad of sixteen, he had bestowed upon him the forfeited estates of the Earl of Northumberland, and he was further weighted with the onerous duties of the warden of the East March. In the latter capacity the youthful John was held responsible for the defences of the English

Digitized by Google

Border, no enviable post in view of the lust for ravage which possessed the lowland Scots of these days. Moreover, the task was rendered all the more irksome by reason of the fact that even a king's son could not command sufficient funds for the purpose. There are in existence four urgent letters written from Warkworth Castle by John, all harping upon the monetary difficulties of his task. In one, " written in haste at Warkworth," he makes the pitiful complaint that his scarcity of funds has obliged him to actually pawn his silver plate and his jewels.

But the Percies came back to Warkworth again. Not he who was the first earl of the house and Hotspur's father. When he fled before the forces of Henry IV he had less than two years to live. Which was well, for he never knew home more. He was hunted hither and thither by the emissaries of the king and knew no peace till death overtook him in the battle at Bramham Moor. The heir of the Percies, Henry the son of Hotspur, a youth of fifteen, was a fugitive in Scotland when his grandfather died, and nearly a decade was to elapse ere the earldom and the Percy estates were restored to him. With that restoration, of course, Warkworth Castle was

Digitized by Google

again numbered among the stately homes of the race.

Its subsequent history need not be followed here. Now one and anon another scion of the house acquired that affection for its sturdy walls and spacious chambers which distinguished the first earl, until the changing conditions of life and the transformation of social customs gradually led to its abandonment as a place of residence. Many of the ruined castles of England present a two fold problem: when they were built, and at what date they ceased to be inhabited. Both problems are suggested by Warkworth. Its most careful historian writes: "With a building of such intense interest, both in the history of architecture and of society, it is vexatious to have to confess that there is no direct evidence to prove when or by whom it was actually built." On the other hand the same authority does not hesitate to commit himself to the conclusion: "On general grounds it seems impossible that a man of such power and such ambition as the first Earl of Northumberland should have done nothing to render his favourite home more habitable and magnificent, nor if the donjon did not then exist with all the latest improvements in house-plan-

Digitized by Google

ning, can we understand why John of Lancaster made Warkworth his headquarters. Although documentary evidence be not forthcoming, and architectural evidence be little favourable, it is impossible not to feel that after all the conception if not the completion of this marvellous donjon may have been the work of the first and the greatest of the eleven earls of the princely house of Louvain."

Thus far Warkworth has suggested only the somewhat aloof associations connected with noble and royal personages; it has other and more congenial claims on the interest of its visitor. These are brought to a focus, however, not by this " worm-eaten hold of ragged stone," as Shakespeare describes the castle, but by the unique little hermitage on the banks of the Coquet near by. In a grant bearing the date of December 3rd, 1531, the sixth Earl of Northumberland writes of this remote retreat as " Myn armytage bilded in a rock of stone within my parke of Warkworth, in the county of Northumberland, in the honour of the blessed Trynete." But that is by no means the earliest mention of the place; nearly half a century before it is specifically referred to in a deed which still exists.

Digitized by Google

When it was first "bilded in a rock" is unknown. Much speculation has been expended on that matter with little definite result. But architectural evidence goes to show that the chapel dates back at least to the fourteenth century, and the probability is that this pious refuge owes its existence to the first Earl of Northumberland.

On the other hand legend credits the hermitage with a different origin. One story tells that the place was founded by a member of the Bertram family in expiation of the murder of his brother; another that it was "the retreat of a Northumberland warrior who having lost the mistress of his heart by some unexpected stroke, with her lost all relish for the world, and retired to this solitude to spend the remainder of his days in devotion for her soul and in erecting this little mausoleum to her memory."

Still more picturesque is that romantic story which links the name of Hotspur's son with the Warkworth hermitage. Bishop Percy's ballad tells how that fugitive returned to England in disguise and won the heart of the Lady Alainore Nevill, the fair daughter of the Earl of Westmoreland. Flying together, and while in search of some holy man who would join their hands

Digitized by Google

WARKWORTH HERMITAGE.

ON THE COQUET.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

in wedlock, the dark night overtook the couple along the banks of the Coquet. A cry from the darkness called forth the hermit and led him to where

> "All sad beneath a neighbouring tree
> A beauteous maid he found,
> Who beat her breast, and with her tears
> Bedewed the mossy ground."

WARKWORTH BRIDGE

Having taken the wanderer to the shelter of his cell, and learnt her story, which told how she had become separated from her lover, the hermit went out into the night again and quickly discovered the missing youth. In response to the enquiry of his guests, "Whose lands are these? and to what lord belong?" the hermit

Digitized by Google

narrates the evil fortunes which have befallen the Percies:

"Not far from hence, where yon full stream
Runs winding down the lea,
Fair Warkworth lifts her lofty towers,
And overlooks the sea.

"Those towers, alas! now stand forlorn,
With noisome weeds o'erspread,
Where feasted lords and courtly dames,
And where the poor were fed."

And so the ballad sings its way, leading to the revelation of the identity of the hermit's guests, and to their request that he would secure the services of some priest to join them in matrimony. It may be that imagination mingles with truth in this poetic tale, but the visitor to the hermitage of Warkworth will agree that "a pleasanter or more inviting spot for young love to mate in spite of family feud and royal displeasure, one must wander far to find."

Nor would it be less difficult to find a retreat more typical than the Warkworth hermitage of those narrow cells which became so common in England when the ideals of the race underwent a change in favour of the contemplative life. Probably in no district of England was the transition so marked as in Northumberland.

Digitized by Google

Strength of body and skill in muscular sports were characteristic of the sons of that northern land, but as they were equally notable for an imaginative temperament they were peculiarly susceptible to the gospel of asceticism. To that changed outlook on life the creation of the Warkworth hermitage was probably due, and certainly it would be hard to imagine a more ideal retreat for one who fell a victim to the selfish thought that his chief business was to ensure the salvation of his own soul.

Among the chambers of the hermitage which still survive in an excellent state of preservation is a remarkable little chapel. The approach is by a steep path beneath the shadow of lusty beeches, whose thickly interlaced branches seem to soften the glare of day into a not unwelcome "dim religious light." The apartment is some eighteen feet long by seven feet in width and height, and at the east end is "the one altar in Northumberland that was not overthrown or defaced during the great religious upheaval of the sixteenth century." Close by, in an arched recess, is a group of figures, including a skin-clad man in a kneeling posture, who is absorbed in contemplation of a nimbed lady who is reclining rather than recumbent. Is it any wonder

Digitized by Google

that poetic imagination, unrestrained by contrary facts, should have evolved from that silent couple the pathetic story of Bishop Percy's ballad? It is pleasanter, at any rate, to allow that lovers' story of life-time devotion to fill the mind than to obliterate it in favour of the darksome spirits of evil which may have tormented many a hermit in this narrow cell.

Having his mind so much attuned to the past by the hermitage and the castle ruins, the visitor to this quiet northern town will be in fit condition to muse upon the long procession of humanity which has passed over Warkworth bridge since it first spanned the waters of the Coquet. This sturdy structure, by which the town is approached from the north, was erected during the closing years of the fourteenth century. Although the upper story of the gate-house at the south end of the bridge is somewhat ruinous, the rest of the work of those long dead masons bids fair to resist the assaults of time for many generations.

Digitized by Google

XX

A HIGHLAND NOBLE'S HOME

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A HIGHLAND NOBLE'S HOME

FIVE or six miles from the head of Loch Fyne a small bay indents the west side of the lake, and on a gently-sloping lawn in the centre of that bay stands Inverary Castle, the chief seat of the illustrious family of Argyll. It is a fitting home for the head of a great Highland clan. To the right rises the conical hill of Duniquaich, with its sombre watch-tower on the summit, recalling those lawless days the memory of which contributes not a little to the romance of the Scottish Highlands. On the left, nestling almost under the shadow of the castle, lies the royal town of Inverary, the latter-day reminder of a time when the followers of a great noble were safest within bow-shot of his fortress. The background is shut in by tree-clad hills, which sweep down to the right and left on either side of the river Aray.

Bannockburn laid the foundations of the fortune of the Argyll family. Although the bards of this noble house claim for it an antiquity

Digitized by Google

reaching back to the shadowy times of the fifth century, the earliest authentic charter connected with the family belongs to the year 1315. Among the adventurous Scots who sided with Robert the Bruce in his struggles for the Scottish crown was one Sir Neil Campbell, of Lochaw (the modern Loch Awe), and so lively a sense did the king entertain of the services thus rendered, culminating at Bannockburn, that he rewarded his follower with the hand of his own sister, the Lady Mary Bruce. It was to Sir Colin Campbell, eldest son of this union, that the charter mentioned above was granted, and it secured to the king's nephew the barony of Lochaw on condition that he provided, at his own charges and whenever required, a ship of forty oars for the royal service.

It does not appear when the Argyll family took up their residence at Inverary; all that is certain is that it was long prior to 1474, for in that year King James III, "for the singular favour he bore to his trusty and well beloved cousin, Colin, Earl of Argyll," created the "Earl's village of Inverary" a free burgh or barony.

Turner's etching of Inverary Castle is most remarkable for its intolerable deal of landscape

Digitized by Google

to one half-penny worth of castle, and yet it is a characteristic transcript of the district, for no matter from what distant standpoint the upper reaches of Loch Fyne are viewed, the pointed turrets of the Duke of Argyll's home cannot fail to arrest the eye. But it is from the public grounds of the castle that the most picturesque views of the building can be obtained. Whether seen through glades of trees with the sunshine transforming its sombre stone into deceptive brightness, or blocking the end of one of the many avenues which stretch away into the park, or with a background of threatening thunder-clouds massed up Glen Aray, the castle asserts itself as the central point in these wide domains. If an uninterrupted view of the building is desired, it may be had either from the bridge over the Aray on the road to Dalmally, or from the private gardens of the castle. It is quadrangular in shape, with four round towers; comprises a sunk basement, two main floors, and an attic story; and is dominated in the centre by a square tower which rises some feet above the main building. When Dr. Johnson visited the castle in 1773, he told Boswell that the building was too low, and expressed a wish that it had been a story higher,— a criticism which

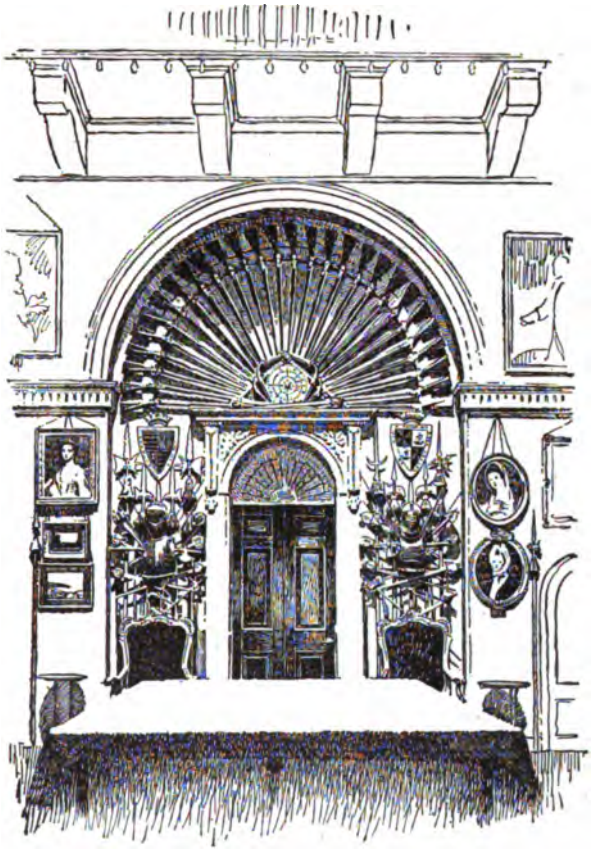
Digitized by Google

has been met to a certain extent, for the dormer-window story is a later addition. It is to the third Duke of Argyll that the present structure is mainly due. Lord Archibald Campbell states that when this ancestor of his had planned a new abode, he, in 1745, ordered the old castle to be blown up, as no longer fit for habitation. A still earlier predecessor, according to a Highland legend, met a yet more singular fate. The lord of the castle in a far-off age, who was distinguished for his magnificent hospitality, when visited by some nobles from Ireland was specially anxious to entertain them in his superb field-equipage, which he was accustomed to use on a campaign. That he might have a reasonable excuse for this departure from usual hospitality, he caused his castle to be destroyed just before his guests arrived. The present building dates from 1744–61; but there was an interruption in the work for a considerable period during the unsettled times of 1745. The third Duke of Argyll is also credited with planning the grounds around the castle.

Appropriate in its outward setting as the chief home of MacCailean Mor — the Gaelic name, meaning "Great Colin's son," by which the head of the Argyll clan is known in the High-

Digitized by Google

lands — Inverary Castle also betrays by its interior that it is the abode of a Highland noble.



THE ARMORY, INVERARY CASTLE

The vestibule leads directly into the central tower. This handsome apartment, known as the

Digitized by Google

armory, extends upward to the full height of the building and is flooded with light from gothic windows at the top. Mingling with innumerable family portraits and other works of art are arms and armour of infinite variety and absorbing historical interest. Here are old flint-lock muskets which dealt many a death wound at Culloden, claymores which have known the red stain of blood, battle-axes which have crashed through targe and helmet, and halberds which have survived from fierce war to grace the peaceful ceremonials of modern times. From either side of the armory a spacious staircase leads to the second floor, and on one of the landings hangs a full length portrait of Princess Louise, the present Duchess of Argyll, flanked by a charming cabinet which is surmounted by an exquisite harp. The house of Argyll, it is said, has ever been famed for its harpers.

To the left of the main entrance is the apartment in which Dr. Johnson and Boswell were entertained, now used principally as a business and reception room. The three chief apartments of the castle extend the whole length of one side of the building, their windows commanding unrivalled views of mountain and glen. One

Digitized by Google

THE SALOON, INVERARY.

THE DUCHESS' BOUDOIR, INVERARY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

corner is taken up with the private drawing-room of the duke and duchess. It is a dainty apartment, furnished in faultless taste, and hung with costly Flemish tapestry. This is not the only room so draped. More Flemish tapestry may be seen in the state bedroom, and this originally hung in the old castle. Again, the large dining-room is decorated with tapestry of the Flemish school, the colours being as vivid as when the cloth left the loom. Next to the private drawing-room, and opening off it, is the saloon, a spacious apartment richly decorated and containing many noble family portraits. The third room is the library; and here, at the small table on the left, it was the habit of the late duke to read prayers to his household.

Generously as the nobles of England have exerted themselves to do honour to and bestow hospitality upon such of America's sons and daughters who have visited the "Old Home," few of their number exceeded the late Duke of Argyll in the warmth of their friendship and the sincerity of their regard for their distinguished guests. The duke was a genuine lover of America and Americans. Although possessing a temperament which caused a fellow peer to describe him as having a "cross-bench mind,"

Digitized by Google

meaning that it was impossible to forecast which side he would take in a political crisis, he never assumed an attitude of hesitancy towards America and her children. "I think," he declared as the chief speaker at the memorable breakfast in London to Lloyd Garrison, "I think that we ought to feel, every one of us, that in going to America we are only going to a second home." And in perfect keeping with that sentiment was his confession to a correspondent: "It is the only disadvantage I know, attaching to warm and intimate friendships with cultivated Americans, that in a great majority of cases they are severed by distance before they can be lost by death. But I have enjoyed too many of these friendships not to be grateful for their memory."

Throughout the Civil War the duke never faltered in supporting the side of the North. Hence the urgent appeals made that he would visit America. Henry Ward Beecher promised that he would "see that a Republican welcome can be more royal than any that is ever given to royalty;" and Whittier wrote: "Hast thou never thought of making a visit to the U. S. A.? Our people would welcome thee as their friend in the great struggle for Union and liberty, and in our

Digitized by Google

literary and philosophical circles thou wouldst find appreciative and admiring friends."

From the year when he succeeded to the title the Duke of Argyll was ever on the alert to offer the hospitality of Inverary Castle to Americans, among the most notable of those received here as honoured guests being Prescott, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lowell. Himself a man of letters of varied attainments, it can be easily imagined how keenly the author of "The Reign of Law" would enjoy having Lowell for his guest; and that Lowell did not fail of experiencing equal pleasure must be obvious from the conclusion of the graceful lines in which he recorded his "Planting a Tree at Inverary:"

Who does his duty is a question
  Too complex to be solved by me,
But he, I venture the suggestion,
  Does part of his that plants a tree.

For after he is dead and buried,
  And epitaphed, and well forgot,
Nay, even his shade by Charon ferried
  To — let us not inquire to what,

His deed, its author long outliving,
  By Nature's mother-care increased,
Shall stand, his verdant almoner, giving
  A kindly dole to man and beast.

Digitized by Google

The wayfarer, at noon reposing,
  Shall bless its shadow on the grass,
Or sheep beneath it huddle, dozing
  Until the thundergust o'erpass.

The owl, belated in his plundering,
  Shall here await the friendly night,
Blinking whene'er he wakes, and wondering
  What fool it was invented light.

Hither the busy birds shall flutter,
  With the light timber for their nests,
And, pausing from their labor, utter
  The morning sunshine in their breasts.

What though his memory shall have vanished,
  Since the good deed he did survives?
It is not wholly to be banished
  Thus to be part of many lives.

Grow, then, my foster-child, and strengthen,
  Bough over bough, a murmurous pile,
And, as your stately stem shall lengthen,
  So may the statelier of Argyll!

Tree-planting seems to have been the tax usually imposed on every notable visitor to Inverary. Harriet Beecher Stowe paid her tribute to the castle grounds, and so did Queen Victoria, and many other less exalted guests. A love for trees seems to have been a common trait of the Argyll family. More than a century

Digitized by Google

and a quarter ago, when Boswell piloted Dr. Johnson through these well-wooded grounds, he, still smarting from the aspersions his companion had cast on the treeless character of Scotland, took a "particular pride" in pointing out the lusty timber of the demesne.

Thanks, perhaps, to that unwearied industry in note-taking to which James Boswell owes his fame, the visitor to Inverary Castle will probably find his imagination more greatly filled with the figures of Dr. Johnson and his biographer than with those of royal and other guests of the house. It was on a Sunday afternoon in the autumn of 1773 that Boswell called at the castle to ascertain whether its ducal owner would like to extend his hospitality to the great lexicographer, whom he had left at the inn in the village. The lord of Inverary at this time was John, the fifth Duke of Argyll, who was satirized by the fribbles of his day because, instead of wasting his guineas on the gambler's-table, he devoted his wealth and his thought to the improvement of his estate and the welfare of his tenants. And the lady who bore the honoured name of the Duchess of Argyll at this period was none other than the beautiful Elizabeth Gunning.

Digitized by Google

Unhappily, no matter how gladly the duchess agreed with her husband in his desire to honour Dr. Johnson, she had adequate reasons for not entertaining the same feelings towards Boswell. He had figured aggressively in a law-suit in which the duchess had been keenly interested, and that on the side adverse to her. Still, the traditions of Highland hospitality had to be observed, and the duchess, while assenting to an invitation to dinner for the following day being extended to Dr. Johnson and his companion, evidently anticipated that an opportunity would present itself for effectually snubbing Boswell. At the dinner-table the irrepressible Boswell made several attempts to placate the antagonism of his hostess. He offered to help her from a dish beside him, and, when that service was coldly declined, lifted his glass to her with the toast, "My Lady Duchess, I have the honour to drink your Grace's good health!"

Afterwards, in the drawing-room, says a recent biographer of Elizabeth Gunning, the beautiful duchess, who still continued to ignore Mr. Boswell, called Dr. Johnson to drink his tea by her side, when, perhaps with the intuition of genius, there came to him a revelation which never failed to capture his great warm heart,

Digitized by Google

and he perceived that this radiant lady was a good mother. For he knew that she had fought a brave fight for her little son; he could see that her wounds were still fresh and bleeding. She had asked him why he made his journey so late in the year. "Why, madame," he replied, "you know Mr. Boswell must attend the Court of Session, and it does not rise till the twelfth of August." In a moment the fair brow was clouded, and her voice grew stern. "I know nothing of Mr. Boswell," she answered sharply.

Imperturbable, even after cooler reflection, Boswell himself gave to the world the history of his visit to Inverary Castle, and the episode was seized upon by the pen of Peter Pindar for the following lampoon:

As at Argyll's grand house my hat I took,
To seek my alehouse, thus began the Duke:
'Pray, Mister Boswell, won't you have some tea?'
To this I made my bow, and did agree —
Then to the drawing-room we both retreated,
Where Lady Betty Hamilton was seated
Close by the Duchess, who, in deep discourse,
Took no more notice of me than a horse.
Next day, myself, and Dr. Johnson took
Our hats to go and wait upon the Duke.
Next to himself the Duke did Johnson place;
But I, thank God, sat second to his Grace.
The place was due most surely to my merits —

Digitized by Google

And faith, I was in very pretty spirits;
I plainly saw (my penetration such is)
I was not yet in favour with the Duchess.
Thought I, I am not disconcerted yet;
Before we part, I'll give her Grace a sweat —
Then looks of intrepidity I put on,
And ask'd her, if she'd have a plate of mutton.
This was a glorious deed, must be confess'd!
I knew I was the Duke's and not her guest.
Knowing — as I'm a man of tip-top breeding,
That great folks drink no healths whilst they are feeding,
I took my glass, and looking at her Grace,
I stared her like a devil in her face;
And in respectful terms, as was my duty,
Said I, 'My Lady Duchess, I salute ye:'
Most audible indeed was my salute,
For which some folks will say I was a brute;
But, faith, it dashed her, as I knew it would;
But then I knew that I was flesh and blood.

A ramble through the grounds of Inverary Castle reveals them to be both spacious and well-kept, and they are nearly always generously open to the public. One of the principal roads leads towards Dalmally, and it passes over a bridge — Frew's Bridge — to which a legend with a dash of humour is attached. At his first attempt the builder of this bridge failed, and his structure collapsed — whereupon he ran away; but the duke of that time fetched him back and made him do his work over again

Digitized by Google

FREW'S BRIDGE, INVERARY.

INVERARY CASTLE.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

— with happier results, as the present soundness of the structure bears witness. Close by, and within a few yards of the Aray, is the silver fir planted by Queen Victoria in 1875. There are many magnificent avenues in the park, notably one of limes which leads to Eas-a-chosain Glen — that glen of which Archibald, the ninth earl, declared that if heaven were half as beautiful he would be satisfied.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OTHER BOOKS BY HENRY C. SHELLEY

Literary By-Paths in Old England

Contents: I. In Spenser's Footsteps; II. The Home of Sir Philip Sidney; III. Memorials of William Penn; IV. The Birthplace of Gray's Elegy; V. Gilbert White's Selborne; VI. Goldsmith's "Deserted Village"; VII. Burns in Ayrshire; VIII. Keats and His Circle; IX. In Carlyle's Country; X. Thomas Hood and His Friends; XI. Royal Winchester.

A thoroughly readable book. His style is pleasing and impersonal. — *The Nation*, New York.

One of the best books of its class seen in recent years. Written with sympathy and understanding. — *Literary Digest*, New York.

Mr. Shelley's book is really charming. . . . Mr. Shelley is in many respects quite the ideal guide, unassuming, sympathetic, and exceedingly well informed. He refreshes vague memories and supplies fresh clues at almost every turn, and his is exactly the book one would like to take along on a pilgrimage to poetic shrines. — *Atlantic Monthly.*

With 24 full-page plates and 100 smaller illustrations from photographs
8vo. Cloth, in box, $3.00 net

John Harvard and His Times

Contents: I. Environment; II. Parentage; III. Early Influences; IV. The Harvard Circle; V. Cambridge; VI. Last Years in England; VII. The New World; VIII. The Praise of John Harvard.

A book of surpassing interest, educationally, historically, and scholastically. — *Journal of Education*, Boston.

Our most vivid and plausible picture of the earliest benefactor of education in this country. — *North American Review.*

An interesting and excellent volume. It is indeed remarkable that it has been possible to produce such a book about a man of whom twenty-five years ago almost nothing was known. We cordially admit Mr. Shelley's scholarship, judgment, and good taste. — *The Nation.*

So far as facts go, he has omitted nothing. More remarkable than his industry, however, is his excellent historic sense. He puts himself into the spirit of the first quarter of the seventeenth century in England. He visualizes its life in various planes. The result is that he has produced a vivid picture of John Harvard's environment. — *Harvard Graduates Magazine.*

With 24 full-page illustrations from photographs
Crown 8vo. Cloth, in box, $2.00 net

LITTLE, BROWN, & CO., *Publishers*, Boston

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OCT 27 1905
OCT 17
OCT 23
NOV 1 1913
OCT 27 1919
DUE DEC 7 1926
DUE APR 3 1926

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OCT 27 1903
OCT 17
OCT 28 1913
NOV 1 1913
OCT 27 1919
DUE DEC 7 1926
DUE APR 3 1928

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OCT 17
OCT 23
NOV 1 1918
OCT 27 1919
DUE DEC 7 1926
DUE APR 3 1926

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

OCT 27 1903
OCT 17
OCT 23
NOV 1 1913
OCT 27 19[illegible]9
DUE DEC 7 1926
DUE APR 3 1926

Digitized by Google

Br 3619.08.9
Untrodden English ways,
Widener Library
006592532
3 2044 081 176 554

Digitized by Google